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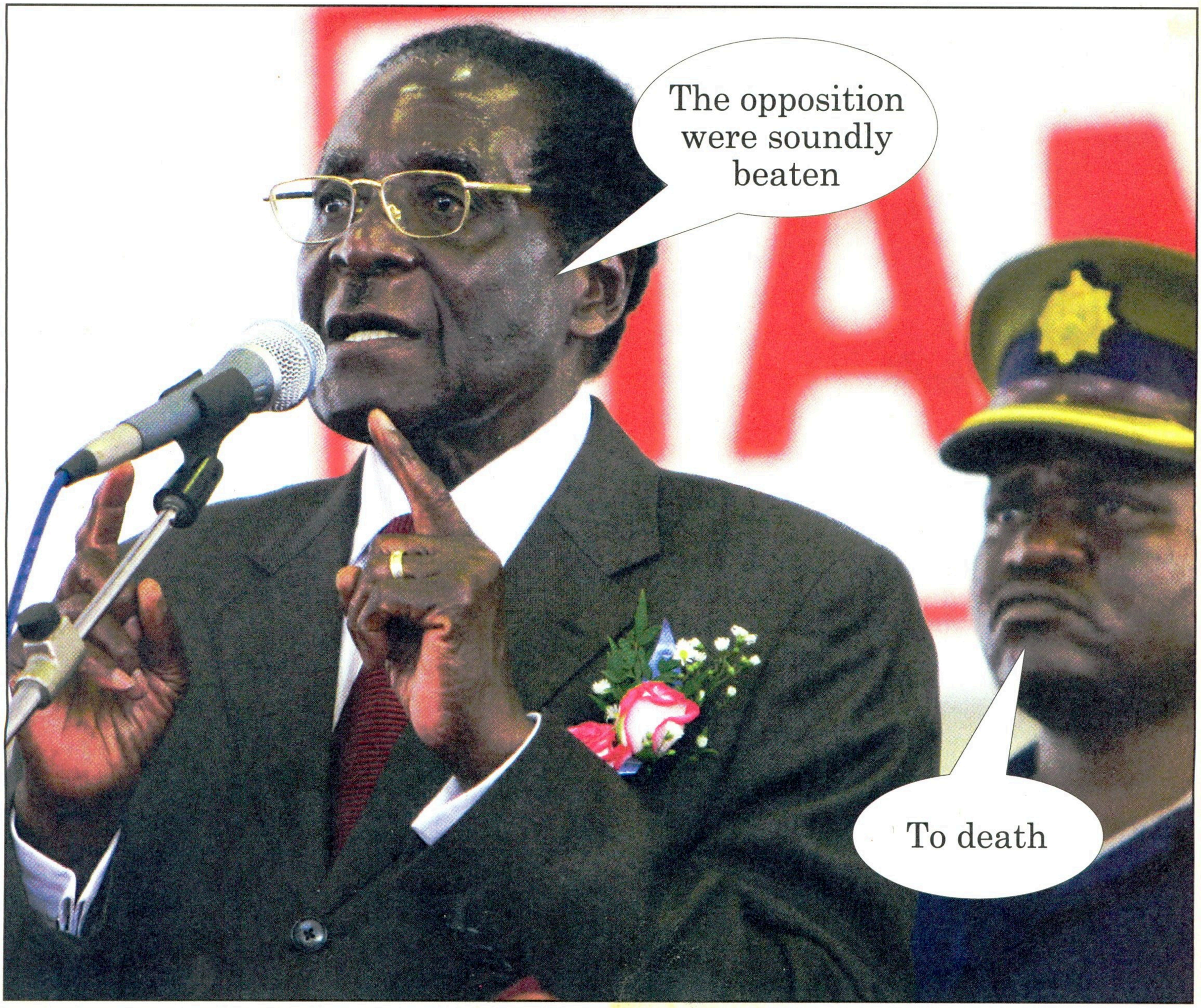

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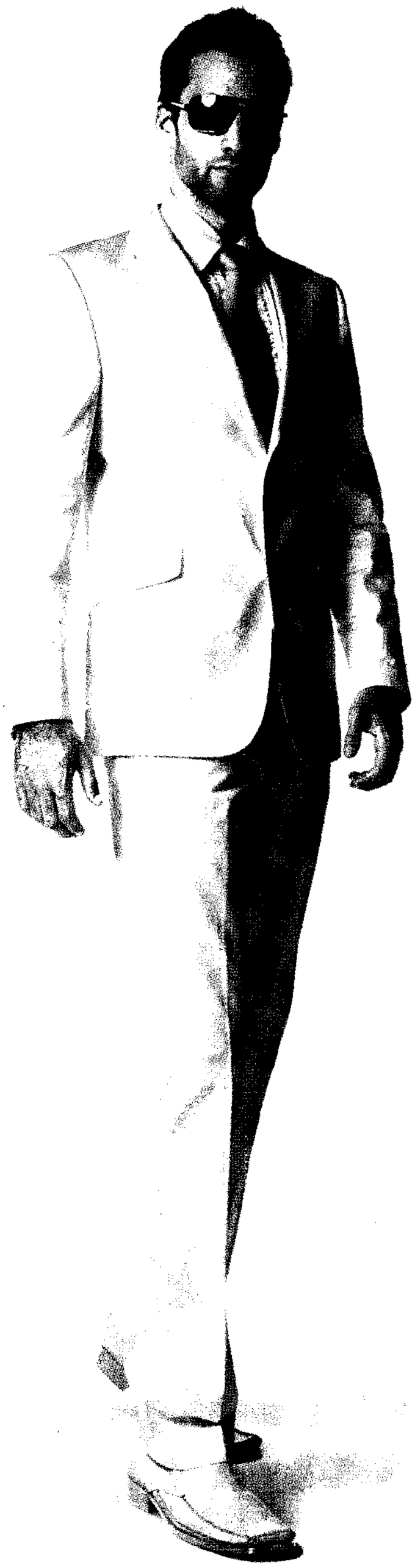

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New balls, please

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JAMMY TAX DODGERS

THE cravenness of the surrender to the rich non-domicile lobby is laid bare in an email from Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs (HMRC) email, seen by the *Eye*, which shows the government contemplating breaking its own laws to appease some of the wealthiest tax dodgers.

In a memo addressing changes to the rules introducing the £30,000 charge for non-doms who want to be taxed only on what they bring into the UK, a senior official reveals: "The FST [*Treasury financial secretary Jane Kennedy*] is nervous about the amendment as it further erodes the choice and confidentiality points that we have made much of in selling this package."

The problem is that Chancellor Alistair Darling has already agreed that anyone paying the £30,000 flat fee will get the "no questions asked" treatment from HMRC on all their foreign income. So attractive is this to non-doms, some of whose income might come from sources they'd rather the taxman didn't know about, that even those who don't have enough offshore income to justify opting for the £30,000 charge would, in the HMRC official's words, "prefer to pay £30,000 to keep things private".

A red rag to a bullish taxman, surely? Not if he's the wealthy tax dodger's friend and acting HMRC chairman Dave Hartnett. The candid official continues: "In a meeting yesterday Dave Hartnett suggested to the FST we might be able to solve this... We could say in guidance that HMRC would 'turn a blind eye' to those who chose to pay the £30,000 even if they were worse off doing so. This is even though the legislation says they cannot [*opt for the flat fee*] in such circumstances." The rest of the note makes clear that Kennedy had given Hartnett the go-ahead to work on the plan.

Meanwhile, as the (Labour!) government ties itself in knots to make sure the richest tax avoiders don't feel any sort of pinch, there's still no news on if and how the 1.1m of Britain's poorer citizens who lose out from the 10p tax debacle (even after the pre-Crewe by-election concessions) are to be compensated.

"I'd cheer up if Tom Harris got sacked"

STANDARD AND PISSPOOR

WHICH bungling banker should the Treasury turn to as the first chief executive of the International Centre for Financial Regulation?

A body that promises "thought leadership and training in the field of optimal financial regulation" should be just what's needed following a year of failure from the financial industry and its regulators, it might be thought. ICFR chairman Mervyn Davies of Standard Chartered Bank agreed that "recent events in financial markets underline this is the right time to launch".

The "recent events" he might have been thinking of include the Northern Rock debacle and the wider sub-prime crisis, significant responsibility for which lies with the credit rating agencies that, by giving healthy credit ratings to duff "collateralised debt obligations", fuelled the trade in crap mortgages. None was more sanguine in the face of the looming disaster than Standard & Poor's.

Strange, then, that Alistair Darling should hand control of the new body to Barbara Ridpath, current "head of ratings services Europe" at... Standard & Poor's!

POLLY WALLY DOODLES

● "Come what may – and the economy may yet bring both hell and high water – Labour will eradicate half of all child poverty by the next election... So if anyone asks what Labour is for, if more of those emails swarm in demanding to know how anyone can ever have a good word for the Blair/Brown era, this is the answer... All those who have despaired of Labour should pause here to give them credit." – **Polly Toynbee**, *Guardian*, 14 March.

● "Look at Labour successes – the minimum wage, child poverty... There is much to be proud of." – **Polly Toynbee**, *Guardian*, 6 May.

● "Gordon Brown's flagship anti-poverty campaign received a triple blow yesterday with news that a rise in both child and pensioner poverty had left Britain a more unequal country than when Labour came to power in 1997... Child poverty in Britain has increased for the second year in a row." – *Guardian* news reports, 11 June.

● "The miserable child and pensioner poverty figures were entirely predictable..." – **Polly Toynbee**, *Guardian*, 13 June.

The Curse of Gnome

INTERVIEWED by the *British Medical Journal* as long ago as 1996, Dr Raj Persaud was asked about accusations of unethical conduct made against him by *Eye* hack Francis Wheen.

"As for Francis Wheen," the great psychiatrist sighed, "here's a chap who's got, for very personal and psychological reasons of his own, some kind of personal vendetta." Physician, heal thyself...

● *Last days of the Raj, 5*

"Nor is it the first time there have been prayers, hymns or readings following a civil partnership. It may be that this ceremony had rather more knobs on.

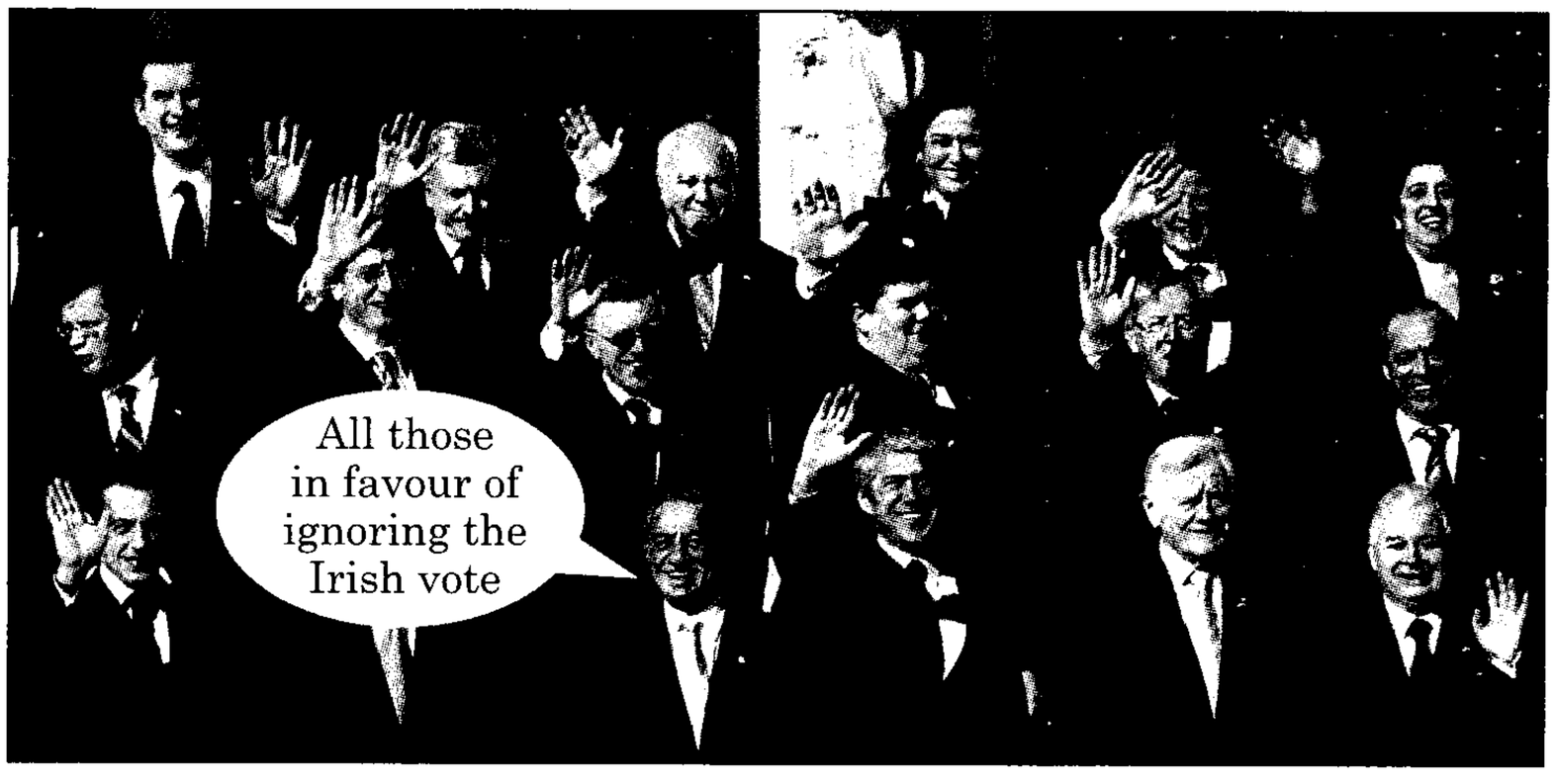
Grauniad

NUMBER CRUNCHING

47.9% Vote against Mugabe in Zimbabwean elections, which EU described as 'travesty of democracy' and supported MDC decision not to stand in second round

53.4% Vote against Lisbon treaty in Irish referendum, which EU 'regrets' and would like them to run a second time

EU DEMOCRACY IN ACTION



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ABC

Street Of Shame

IT's Groundhog Day at the *Daily Express* and *Daily Star*. Four months after settling a libel action from Kate and Gerry McCann by giving them £550,000 in damages plus an amazing front-page apology, Dirty Des's rags are facing another legal complaint over their coverage of the Madeleine saga.

Last week they received solicitors' letters from the so-called "Tapas 7", the McCanns' holiday companions, threatening to sue "in relation to a number of articles".

Once again Dirty Des's legal department has issued an urgent edict that all Maddy-related material on the papers' websites must be "removed forthwith". And, once again, hacks are bracing themselves for a bumper payout and an abject grovel.

RICHARD "Dirty" Desmond is hugely proud of *OK!*, which he boasts is the world's biggest-selling magazine. So when a couple of pages inadvertently appeared twice in the same issue earlier this month he became more than somewhat agitated.

"You fuckin' useless fat cunt," he shouted at a female production executive as she tried to dodge the raging chairman. He then threw away her keyboard, ripped out her phone and threatened to kill her.

Two IT guys with the misfortune to be in the room at the time copped it too. "What do you think this is – the fucking canteen?" Dirty Des screamed at a conscientious young man finishing his custard tart at his post. Beside him, another employee sat hunched at his computer screen – leading Desmond to assume, viewing him from behind, that he was asleep. "Wake up you cunt!" he bawled, kicking the chair. "You are fucking fired!"

But there appear to have been some misunderstandings on Desmond's part. The chap sacked for sleeping at his post was in fact wide awake – sitting at a slightly tilted, slumped angle only because his chair was broken. (He has now been reprieved.) And the woman he abused so violently was not involved in the cock-up: it occurred on her day off. She is now off work with stress and consulting m'learned friends. The fate of the custard tart worker remains unknown.

HACKS at the *Daily Star* have renamed their pop pages BOSS instead of GOSS after their chairman Richard "Dirty" Desmond featured himself across three columns last week. Wearing what looked like one of Roger Daltrey's cast-off shirts (see photograph), Des the drummer and his "supergroup", the RD Crusaders, entertained *OK!* minions from around the globe at a charity gig.

Setting a new record for OBN beyond the call of duty, perhaps in an attempt to avoid joining the 19 staffers Desmond had just drummed out of a job that same week, the *Star* reported that "TV presenter Tania Bryer, 45, welcomed Mr Desmond, saying: 'This is a man who has been compared to Keith Moon on drums by Mr Roger Daltrey himself.' Looking achingly rock 'n' roll in Prada sunglasses, the Northern and Shell legend took to the stage with Lulu, 59, Peter Andre, 36, Steve Harley, 57, guitarist and songwriter Russ Ballard, 62 and Robert Hart, 59."

REBEKAH WADE had a furrowed brow last Saturday morning as she studied her newspaper's coverage of the Kay Burley fracas.

While other newspapers reported Kay's assault on a photographer – and had a picture of the Sky presenter grabbing Kirsty Wigglesworth round the throat – there was none of that in the *Sun*'s account, which was purely about brave Burley being hit with a camera but refusing medical treatment. How had the *Sun* missed the throttling angle? Why did its entire story read like a PR handout from Kay Burley?

It took Rebekah all of 10 seconds to guess the answer. Burley's husband had interceded with the *Sun* newsdesk, giving it the official line about her ordeal while steering them away from mentioning the assault on Ms Wigglesworth. And, since Burley's husband is *Sun* political editor George Pascoe Watson, the newsdesk was happy to oblige!

CONGRATULATIONS to *Telegraph* supremo Will Lewis for bravely persevering with his mission to turn the paper into a news-free celeb magazine despite howls of anguish from readers.

On 13 June the thirsty editor-in-chief excelled himself by carrying not one word about the 15-year jail sentence imposed on the wife of 21/7 bomber Hussain Osman for failing to tell police that her husband planned a massacre.

That same day he found space in the home news section for half a page puffing Keira Knightley's new film and a quarter-page on the Wayne-Coleen nuptials, filed by Will's newly appointed "showbiz editor".

Alas, it seems Lewis's efforts to turn his organ into a pale imitation of a Rupert Murdoch title have been in vain. For he was nowhere to be seen at a lavish 40th birthday party the Dirty Digger threw for *Sun* editor Rebekah Wade.

The absence of the well-refreshed *Torygraph* helmsman may indicate that suggestions he was "close" to Murdoch and a candidate for the editorship of everything from the *Wall Street Journal* to the *Sunday Times* were pure fantasy. Any mention of the Wade party, meanwhile, is considered inadvisable in Lewis's vicinity, so bereft is the poor mite at his failure to be summoned to the revels.

So how long does Lewis expect to remain as editor of the *Telegraph*? It's said that relations with his boss, chief executive Murdoch Maclennan, are strained – which may or may not have something to do with the Murdoch rumours.

Lewis himself seems unsure about his future. When a *Telegraph* foreign reporter recently renegotiated the terms of his contract, the editor said matter-of-factly: "You will want this in writing, of course. I won't be around for ever."

SLUMMY mummy Lowri Turner, the ubiquitous parenting expert, has written a feature for *Grazia* magazine about the child she had last year with her second husband Nicol Batra, a chap of Indian descent.

"Why," she wonders, "did I find it so hard to bond with my mixed-race baby?" Er, probably because the longer she strings out her agonising the more cash she rakes in.

The infant was only a few weeks old when Lowri started telling *Guardian* and *Daily Mail* readers how distressed she was to have a non-white child. She feared that she'd be "stereotyped as a Vicky Pollard figure" – as well she might be, having given Batra the heave-ho nine weeks before their baby was born, just as she dumped previous hubby Paul Connew a month before the birth of *their* second child.

In her *Grazia* piece last week she lamented that she couldn't include a photo of her daughter "because her father fundamentally disagreed with my decision to tell the truth about my feelings. He asked that I not name her or allow her picture to be used again, and I have given a court undertaking to that effect". Fancy! Not that it stops Lowri exploiting the wee tot yet again, over three pages of *Grazia*.

ATHLETES TAKE VIAGRA SHOCK

"I hope that's a baton"

IT IS perhaps just as well that *Mail* hackette Rachel Simhon is off to the showbiz-free zone of *The National*, Abu Dhabi's new broadsheet.

Simhon, the outgoing deputy editor of *Weekend* magazine, excelled herself recently by proposing an exclusive chat with Michael Barrymore's ex-wife Cheryl. "Yes, a great plan," agreed Paul Dacre. "But what exactly has she been doing lately?"

"Er, not a lot," came the unanimous response from his appalled executives. "She's been dead for three years."

LONDON's *Evening Standard* has exposed the estate agent Egerton Roche for advertising properties that aren't actually on its books, a mere six months after the *Eye* first ran the story.

The agency was set up last October by Michael Curness and Kevin Hall, a former Tory prospective parliamentary candidate who defected to UKIP in protest at David Cameron's Blairish tendencies. Curness claims that it specialises in "the most prestigious areas" such as Chelsea, Knightsbridge, Belgravia and Mayfair. As the *Evening Standard* points out, several owners of expensive flats and houses in these areas have been surprised to see their homes appearing in Egerton's ads in glossy mags, since they never appointed the agency to represent them. (Though the *Standard* didn't mention it, some other properties advertised by Egerton Roche don't exist at all.)

But it isn't only through ads that Curness has been able to nurture his delusions of grandeur. Last December he wrote an article headed "Diary of an Estate Agent", describing a typical week in which he and Hall dropped in on their "favourite marchioness" before finding a luxury pad for the sons of "a Middle Eastern client". Which newspaper proudly published this self-promoting dross? Step forward the *Evening Standard*!

LEAVING his post as the *Independent*'s Pandora columnist, Oliver Duff could not resist one last swipe at some of his rivals on other papers.

"Princess Beatrice was assaulted by Fleet Street's haggard, green-eyed harpies, who appeared eager to provoke an eating disorder with their risible remarks about biscuit tins. Please down your foundation and trowels and take a bow, Allison Pearson, Janice Turner and Fiona McIntosh," he wrote.

And with that, Duff was off to work on the *Indy*'s news desk to make the acquaintance of his new boss, incoming executive editor Ben Preston – who as colleagues were all too eager to point out, is married to haggard, foundation-trowelled harpy Janice Turner.

THE ZZZ-LIST

Utterly pathetic non-stories about celebrities from the national press. Readers' contributions welcome.

"Edith Bowman was spotted taking her new tot for a stroll near her North London home yesterday. The Radio One DJ held baby Rudy close to her chest as boyfriend, Editors singer Tom Smith, walked ahead holding the newborn's baby basket." – *Sun*

THE LAST DAYS OF THE RAJ...

SO. Farewell then Dr Raj Persaud, whose unprofessional behaviour was first chronicled in these pages as long ago as 1994.

"Shame of Dr Copycat," shrieked the *Daily Mail*, which noted that before his downfall the bubonic plagiarist was "once a regular expert on ITV's *This Morning With Richard and Judy*" and "appeared regularly on Radio 4's science programme *All In The Mind*". Strangely, it omitted to add that he was also a regular pundit for the *Daily Mail*, where he offered psychiatric assessments of celebs he'd never met.

But institutions even more august than the *Mail* are now left with great dollops of egg on their faces – notably the Royal College of Psychiatrists, which only last year commissioned Dr Raj to edit *The Mind: A User's Guide*. The book had 44 chapters, each written by a specialist in the field, but you'd hardly guess that anyone else was involved from the cover, which was a photo of Persaud leaning on a chromium-plated barstool as if auditioning for a boy-band.

Some of the eminent contributors were dismayed when they received their proofs – not just by Persaud's preening egotism but also because he had anonymously added paragraphs to their articles.

As one told the *Eye* at the time: "It showed that whoever wrote it hadn't read or understood my chapter: it was simply wrong. This is reverse plagiarism – passing off his crappy work as mine."

The college can't say it wasn't warned. Months before publication, a contributor sent a long letter to its president, Professor Sheila Hollins, begging her to reconsider the project. "I don't think it was a good idea for the college to employ Dr Persaud as an editor," he wrote. "As psychiatrists we know that past behaviour is the best predictor of future behaviour. Dr Persaud seems to have been a plagiarist in the past and I think it could reasonably have been assumed that he would continue to show the same behaviour. I suspect that Dr Persaud's behaviour will remain unchanged and that if the book is published the college might in the future be embarrassed to have chosen as editor someone whose reputation went on to a drastic decline."

Raj Persaud

Prescient words. Last week the General Medical Council found Persaud unfit to practise and convicted him of bringing the profession into disrepute. But news of the verdict seems not to have reached the Royal College of Psychiatrists: by the end of the week its homepage was still proudly promoting "his" book and urging members to download his monthly podcasts.

JUST FANCY THAT!

"One of the criticisms of peer review is that ideas can be copied through the privilege of reading papers before they are published... Electronic publishing is dramatically reducing the time between acceptance and publication online, and greater openness of the review process and ownership of views will further help to minimise plagiarism."

– From "Peer Review – A Vital Test of Credibility", a 2004 article in the journal *Progress in Neurology & Psychiatry* written by, er, Dr Raj Persaud.

TO CHAV AND TO HOLD

THE wedding of spud-faced nipper Wayne Rooney to Coleen McLoughlin spurred the *Daily Mail*'s E.I. Addio, Paul Hayward, into philosophical mood.

"Our country made an intellectual breakthrough this week when it looked at Wayne Rooney's wedding and saw nothing to sneer at," he mused. "Those of us who think Rooney is entitled to a little understanding and respect were bracing ourselves for headlines about a union of 'chav royalty', but that kind of condescension was rare."

Clearly he doesn't read his own newspaper, which ran a two-page hatchet job on the chavvy young lovebirds by Natalie Clarke. "The brutal truth is that Coleen has very little style and never will have, no matter how many zeros on the price tag of the frocks you put her in," she reported.

Clarke's condescension provoked a furious riposte from Marina Hyde in the *Grauniad*. "The sneering at Wayne and Coleen's Italian nuptials," she claimed, "confirms that classist snobbery is thriving in Britain." How dare anyone accuse the newlyweds of vulgarity!

Clearly Hyde doesn't read her own paper either – or indeed her own columns. As recently as March this year, when Coleen was said to be working on a fundraiser for anti-gun charities, Hyde was witheringly sarcastic: "It is nice to see Coleen getting asked to do the odd thing – one always fears she might be spread too thickly with just the ITV multi-programme presenting deal, the exercise DVD, the magazine column, the autobiography deal, the children's book series, the fashion spokesmodel work and the advertising contracts. Only a few months ago Coleen was asked whether she would consider a move to Hollywood, and seemed rather resigned when she replied: 'We have to think about Wayne's career at Manchester United.' Don't you loathe how he holds her back?"

In other columns Hyde has sneered at Coleen's "hopelessly unrefined family members", at the vulgarity of Coleen's 21st birthday party ("a yawning portal to some new circle of hell") and at the stupidity of her spud-headed sweetheart ("the roundheaded dummy"). So why not sneer at their wedding? Perhaps she was merely peeved that the *Mail* beat her to it.

MEANWHILE at a series of navel-gazing *Guardian* debates on the future of journalism, Marina Hyde got very worked up during a discussion on the important topic of, er, celebrity news and gossip.

The columnist laid into Camilla Wright, founder of the Popbitch website, for publishing a rumour last year about "my non-affair with Alan Rusbridger". Would Wright now like to apologise?

"I'm sorry – I thought I did," Wright murmured.

"No, you didn't," Hyde insisted.

Observer hack James Robinson tried to calm things down, saying no one believed Hyde had an affair with Rusbridger. But Marina refused to be mollified, maintaining that "a lot of people" did. Cue panic among *Grauniad* staff who were recording the event for the paper's website. Should they edit out this exchange about their great leader? After much hand-wringing it was decided self-censorship would only mean the story was leaked anyway. So at 4pm the next day, a transcript belatedly made it on to the web.

THE World's Worst Sports Columnist, Jasper "Our Sally" Gerard, strode fearlessly into print after F1 commentator Martin Brundle landed in trouble for using the word "pikey" on air.

"Even though the public use the 'p' word, the media must pretend it is a non-word," he informed *Daily Telegraph* readers. "I discovered this writing a piece elsewhere praising the neo-Palladian caravan of Freddie Eastwood, the footballer... I was condemned and the poor editor carpeted."

Up to a point. What actually earned Gerard his rebuke from the reader's editor of the *Observer* was not only calling Eastwood a pikey but also writing of his mobile home that "of course it doesn't have wheels – forget homes, no cars within five miles of a gypsy camp keep wheels for long".

Alas, there will be no more of Gerard's pearls of wisdom for readers of the *Daily Telegraph* sports section: his Thursday slot has been handed to former rugby player Brian Moore, with our Sally being foisted on to the *Sunday Telegraph* sports pages as a consolation prize.

It's been a long time since I caught crabs. The last occasion was 15 years ago on the Isle of Wight. Oh, what a long, hot summer that was.

Bryony Gordon, Daily Telegraph

MARR'S BAR

ELEVEN years ago, as editor of the *Independent*, Andrew Marr entered the debate about privacy law. "There is an argument about whether to allow judge-made law to accumulate or to have a clean, honest, open debate in Parliament," he said. "I'm enough of a traditionalist to believe that is what should happen rather than allow it to be settled by judges."

But the judges carried on regardless. Over the past decade they have developed an increasingly restrictive law of privacy by using human rights legislation to suppress stories that were previously publishable, since there was no question of libel. Beneficiaries include assorted footballers, Naomi Campbell, HRH the Prince of Wales, J. K. Rowling and the obscure Canadian folk singer Loreena McKennitt, who won an injunction against a memoir written by a former friend. The latest passenger to leap aboard the accelerating bandwagon is Max Mosley, whose privacy case against the *News of the World* starts next month. No doubt many more celebs will follow this route in future, since judicial sympathy for plaintiffs in such cases is now well known.

What isn't such common knowledge is that the courts are also willing to stop newspapers from even reporting the fact that a privacy injunction has been obtained. And who has sought to invoke this gag on the press? Step forward Andrew Marr, the great traditionalist, who obtained an injunction earlier this year not only to stop publication of "private" information about him but also to prevent any reporting of the fact that he had been to court at all. The *Eye* was one of a number of publications that received a solicitors' letter, giving "legal advice" that Marr had obtained an injunction but adding that we mustn't mention it.

Lord Gnome's lawyers asked Marr's lawyers what the court had been told and on what grounds the order had been made, as well as requesting a copy of the order itself. Basic requirements of justice, one might think. Marr's lawyers clearly thought otherwise, adopting a thoroughly obstructive attitude as they tried to fob off our request, no doubt in the hope that we'd give up. It was only when the *Eye* threatened an application to court that they belatedly provided the information and the order, and abandoned their efforts to prevent us informing readers of Andrew Marr's little legal excursion.

LAST week's resurrection in Downing Street of failed Asbo tsar Louise Casey, along with her report *Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime* and its rehashed, reheated crime initiatives, perplexed those working in the criminal justice system.

Everyone thought they had seen the last of Tony Blair's punitive apparatchik when her "Respect" unit was quietly dismantled by the new regime and Children's Secretary Ed Balls pronounced her antisocial behaviour orders a flop.

Unpopular with the courts, most Asbos were being breached, propelling youngsters into already full jails and detention centres. With rising youth violence kicking against a general reduction in recorded crime, Casey's orders were believed to have failed.

Curious, then, that the woman who as "homelessness tsar" attacked charities for handing out food and sleeping bags because they were apparently perpetuating the problem, should be back grabbing the headlines, apparently with the prime minister's blessing.

Could her reappearance have anything to do with the meetings beleaguered Gordon Brown has been having with Blair and other advisers about how to survive beyond his first anniversary as PM? As well as banging up suspects for 42 days, what better way to garner popularity than by resurrecting the old tough-on-crime agenda?

Hence Casey's package of shaming offenders with chain-gang-style community work (announced and rejected by previous administrations); more privatisation of probation duties (already failed); the drawing-up of crime maps (which will stigmatise neighbourhoods); and her call for the appointment of a commission for victims (legislation for that was passed in 2004 but has been ignored as spending on criminal injuries compensation for victims has shrunk under Labour).

Worryingly, the desire to woo the populist vote might mean Balls' more sensible approach to youth crime – early intervention and trying to keep all but the violent from jail, which has had proven results – is perceived as "too soft" and Casey, made a Companion of the Order of Bath in the latest honours, ends up with more clout in the Home Office.

REMEMBER the spat between former home secretary David Blunkett and Scotland Yard over who was to blame for the "over-reaction" to an intelligence report which saw army tanks sent to Heathrow and a ring of steel thrown round the city just before the invasion of Iraq?

At the time, parliament was told it had "credible" evidence of an al-Qaeda plot to down an airliner in the UK with a surface-to-air missile. But when only chaos ensued, it prompted speculation that the exercise had been a government stunt to soften anti-war opinion. Well not quite, it would seem.

It has just emerged that the "credible" intelligence came from a prison guard who overheard some inmate gossip. The warden reported that a surface-to-air missile would be fired from the car park at Legoland theme park at an airliner leaving nearby Heathrow. Prison intelligence forwarded the report to Special Branch, with a health warning over the intelligence and the source. Now, following an internal prison investigation into an unrelated matter, serious questions have been raised about the guard's integrity.

After he left politics, Blunkett blamed police for the decision to send in the tanks. "It was male, macho, silly laddism. *Boy's Own* comic stuff. They couldn't help themselves," he told a biographer. Comic book stuff indeed...

CALLED TO ORDURE

POLITICAL cabal ignores inconvenient votes and plans to lock people up without even telling them what they are meant to have done wrong? Welcome not to Zimbabwe but Westminster.

Like any survivor inside Harare's Zanu PF, Labour pickthank Keith Vaz knows when his loyalty is required. Vaz chairs the home affairs select committee, one of the biggest backbench scrutiny jobs in parliament. When he was levered into position by Broon's whips a year ago, there were fears he could be a government stooge. How right we were to be suspicious!

Vaz rushed to the government's help on the 42-days detention bill. One snag was that Vaz's cross-party committee had earlier, with a couple of caveats, come out firmly *against* the bill. So how did Vaz square his committee's considered scepticism with his own need to appease the whips? (*Shurely "reach an independent, mature verdict based on the evidence"? Ed.*)

Often gurgling with amusement, Vaz admitted his committee "came to the conclusion that there was absolutely no evidence to support a permanent extension of the 28-day period to 42 days". And yet he was supporting the bill.

Vaz was comprehensively torpedoed by his deputy on the committee, veteran David Winnick (Lab, Walsall N). He disclosed that Vaz sent an email to MPs which urged support for the government on 42 days. "We are adamant that the legislation will affect only those who would use terrorism against our people," said the email.

Vaz thought Winnick's intervention a tremendous joke. "I cannot believe that any email that I could send out could be regarded as being dangerous," he giggled. He kept saying he was "satisfied" by the bill.

Vaz (Leicester E) noted that Home Secretary Jacqui Smith had promised £12.5m for "preventive work" in "community engagement" (political speak for bunging a few million to Labour seats with heavy minority votes). Diane Abbott (Lab, Hackney N) and fellow Labour dissident Jeremy Corbyn (Islington N) both guffawed at the remark, shouting: "Yeah, in Leicester!"

FOREIGN Secretary David Miliband and the Lib Dems' foreign spokesman Ed Davey both surpassed themselves during Commons debates on European affairs. Neither was prepared to accept that the Irish "no" vote in the recent referendum had killed the Lisbon Treaty. *Au contraire.* Mentioning how he had been reading that morning's *Le Figaro* (ie aren't I the clever one?), Miliband suavely said the vote merely allowed the Irish government "to address the issue in their own time".

Davey castigated Ireland for not coming up with "a plan". He bellowed: "It is legitimate to ask the Irish when they are going to make a decision." Er, didn't they just do that with their thumping "no"?

Miliband has developed a new Commons style which mixes appalling, overdone sycophancy (mainly directed at Labour backbenchers who might one day make him their leader) with a shamelessly deceitful pretence that the Tory party wants to leave Europe, even though it is long stated Tory policy to remain in the EU. Why else does UKIP exist?

The European debate was, for once, a triumph for the Euro-obsessive Bill Cash (Con, Stone). The Lisbon Treaty, he said with a small slip of the tongue, was "as dead as a Dido". Perhaps Henry Purcell could compose a suitable lament.

WHAT news of former Blair era ministers David Jamieson and Ivor Caplin, who both stepped down from the Commons in 2005 to begin lucrative careers in the lobbying game?

Jamieson, a former transport minister, took up with Golden Arrow Communications, whose clients include National Express and GNER. Caplin, who served as a defence minister, can now be found at Foresight Communications, pressing the flesh for various arms firms. But how good are they at their respective jobs?

At the Commons public administration select committee, transport minister Tom Harris said he had met Jamieson just once. They had a drink in the Pugin Room at Westminster. And what was discussed? "He had good advice on how to deal with civil servants," said Harris, insisting that no lobbying business was done. National Express and GNER may want to raise this when next paying Golden Arrow's consultancy fees (Jamieson is paid a reported £250 an hour).

Local government minister Iain Wright admitted that he had once met Caplin. But this, too, does not seem to have been the most fruitful encounter. "It was at a reception," said Wright, who chairs the Labour Friends of Israel group. "It was 'hello, how are you?' and that was it." Worth every penny, these ex-ministers!

'Gavel Basher'

HOW sensible was it for Transport Secretary Ruth Kelly to give Balfour Beatty the £5bn contract to run the M25 motorway for the next 30 years? The firm just set one part of London's transport back years when its Metronet consortium, supposedly repairing the Tube, collapsed; so putting it in charge of another big slice of infrastructure looks distinctly unwise.

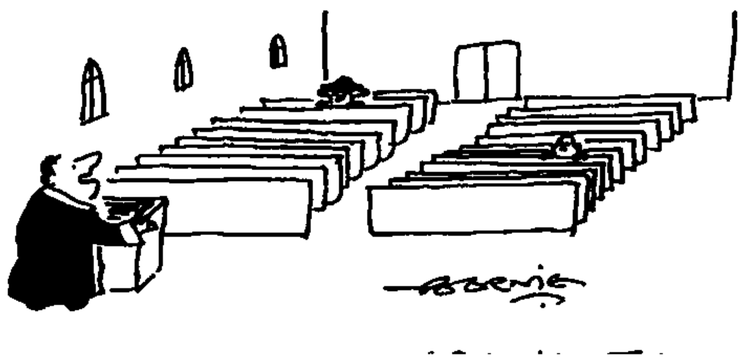
The fact that WS Atkins is Balfour Beatty's partner in the M25 contract – a PFI deal to widen and then run London's outer ring road – is equally worrying. Atkins was Balfour's partner in the Metronet failure.

When Kelly was being harangued by the Commons transport select committee over the failure of Labour's Tube scheme, Clive Efford MP asked: "If these companies have suffered by reputation, does that mean you would not look favourably on any contracts that they were involved in for public sector work in the future?"

Kelly promised: "One of the issues that we look at is the competence and delivery record of individual companies." However, the incompetence of Balfour and Atkins and their failure to "deliver" seem to have been forgotten. Why the amnesia?

The fact that another company, Skanska, owns 40 percent of the consortium taking charge of the M25 until 2038 probably helps. The Swedish firm has a very simple way of encouraging government confidence: it hired one of Labour's friends when Adrian Montague took a seat on its board in 2007. Montague helped design Labour's PFI scheme, so he is invaluable to the firm in winning it more PFI work.

"I killed my wife and buried her in the garden today... Does that make me a bad person, Joe?"



"Today, I want to speak to you all about this country's moral vacuum"

IN THE last issue of the *Eye*, we published a curious cutting of a local newspaper headline: "Wife beaters waiting up to year for course". The story behind the headline, though, turns out to be equally intriguing but far more serious.

In the last two years, the government has proved effective at providing sympathetic justice to the victims of domestic violence, with a mixture of punishments that include programmes aimed at changing abusive behaviour. Early indications are that those placed on specialist programmes are less likely to reoffend than those sent to prison.

Shame, then, that the government failed to fund sufficient programmes for the number of wife-beaters going through the courts. (A £40m boost for probation announced by ministers in spring merely offset the effects of an earlier 5 percent budget cut.)

Thus some men sentenced to supervision on condition they attend an intensive course end up waiting more than a year. In other cases, the court order has expired before the course has either been started or completed.

In the worst examples uncovered in a survey by Napo, the probation officers' union, some men have gone on to attack their partners again while waiting for a place – joined-up government at its best.

'Backbiter'

COUP, ER...

IN AN otherwise carefully choreographed display, there was one big surprise when Simon Mann, old Etonian, mercenary and – as President Obiang Nguema of Equatorial Guinea so elegantly put it – "criminal bastard" – went on trial in Malabo on 17 June.

Mann went through the now familiar cast of toffs, flakes and foreigners who helped him try to topple the government and grab its oil wealth. One of the main organisers, he said, had been Mark Thatcher, who in 2005 reluctantly agreed a plea bargain in South Africa where he admitted perhaps to funding mercenary activity but owned up to nothing in connection with Equatorial Guinea or a coup.

Less well reported were charges against Nigel "Nosher" Morgan, an ex-British army officer and former friend of Mann living in South Africa. Morgan is alleged to have helped plan the coup but also to have tipped off South African intelligence. He was also the main source for at least half the more lurid stories that have appeared in the British media about the affair, was consultant to a BBC drama about the conspiracy and the source of a "thick pile of invaluable documents" in Adam Roberts' execrable *The Wonga Coup*.

Morgan's indictment would appear to cast doubt on much of their testimony, and certainly to a new falling out among the plotters, double crossers and those who backed them. It has been a field day for the lawyers, who look forward to a new bumper round when the circus comes to London on 26 June – where Equatorial Guinea seeks to persuade the law lords to overturn high court and appeal court rulings denying them the opportunity to sue the alleged architects of the plot – in which Equatorial Guinea has named Simon Mann, but not Mark Thatcher.

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

IT SEEMS our MEPs are so busy amassing personal fortunes they have forgotten the reason they were elected in the first place.

Having successfully blocked attempts to publicise their own dodgy expenses estimated at around £140m, they are now hastily trying to wipe out the last vestiges of dissent among their ranks.

Not only did they vote to ignore the Irish vote on the Lisbon Treaty, but they have refused to allow an Independent MEP to even talk about it.

Although MEPs are allowed at least one minute to voice their opinion, MEP Ashley Mote was almost drowned out completely as he tried to talk about bullying and intimidation before the Irish vote on 18 June.

Undaunted, Mr Mote strove on with a quote from Edmund Burke: "The people are the masters – not you. You ignore that – and ignore the rule of law –at your peril!"

Needless to say, his words fell on deaf ears. And next month MEPs will vote on the Faustian proposal of Europhile Richard Corbett to wipe out all independent MEPs and minority parties by raising the threshold for political groups in the parliament– that way everyone will agree about everything!

BAD NEWS for freedom of information in Europe: the European commission has come up with a plan to make itself even less transparent than it is already.

The commission proposes to change freedom of information rules by limiting the word "document" to refer to papers that appear on the official register.

Ian Harden, secretary-general of the European Ombudsman's office, has already protested that this "raises fundamental issues of principle about the EU's commitment to openness and transparency".

He said: "The overall effect of the proposed revision would be that the commission could share documents informally with a limited number of favoured external recipients of its choice without having to give public access to them."

Of all the EU member states, only Ireland voted

However, Mr Harden also made the dubious move of calling on the European parliament to challenge the plans. This was bizarre. For apart from their continued attempts to crush dissent, MEPs even voted to keep their own bloated allowances out of the public gaze.

NEWS FROM THE NORTH-WEST FRONTIER

THE deaths in Afghanistan of four soldiers killed by a roadside bomb drew unwelcome attention to a particular problem for the Ministry of Defence: not just that the four were in a flimsy "snatch" Land-Rover; but that three of them were Territorial Army reservists serving with the 23 SAS Regiment.

There are many reservists in the 'Stan doing much longer tours than they, their commanders or civilian employers ever expected. Most of their units have suffered significant shortfalls in manpower: 16 percent in the TA and nearly 36 percent in the Royal Auxiliary Air Force in 2007. Fewer boots on the ground mean that for those still "in", there is much more to be done. Thus the 800 or so serving in various units in Iraq and Afghanistan are feeling the strain.

Despite the reservists' commitment and sacrifice, some elements in the MoD see the TA as a kind of Home Guard. "Church halls and the Brecon Beacons are still routinely used by reservists from all three Services," writes the assistant chief of the defence staff (reserves and cadets) in celebration of the TA's centenary year in the MoD magazine.

It's a view that has more in common with *Dad's Army* than reality for personnel who have served in many theatres, including Bosnia, Sierra Leone and Kosovo.

Signs are that, by order of the Treasury, the MoD will continue mobilizing individual reservists to "fill gaps" in regular units, rather than preparing whole reserve units for ops. Some 290 call-outs have already been issued this year to individuals to fill gaps – 5 percent of the total number deployed – and the setting-up of four new TA units has been shelved.

Some of these soldiers end up filling gaps for two or even three tours. They train with operational units often miles away from their parent units; they have to buy bits of their own kit, pay far more for insurance while on active duty than regulars, face delays in getting paid, and when they come home they go back to their families with even less attention paid to their welfare and mental health needs than to regulars.

Meanwhile, those left behind dodge the same bullets and bombs, share the same sangars and sometimes pay the same price as their regular comrades.

JUST FANCY THAT!

"The tests aren't very demanding. They're hardly more difficult than Key Stage Two tests which are sat by 11-year-olds."

– Chris Woodhead, former chief inspector of schools, accuses teachers who can't pass maths tests of "innumeracy", the Daily Mail, *2006*

"I can't do that off the top of my head; I'm happy to admit that. I don't think that's the kind of everyday maths that people need. I think people need to be able to check their change when they go to the shop, they need to be able to calculate what they're owed. That's the kind of maths people need."

– Chris Woodhead criticises the Key Stage Two maths test after struggling with a simple number puzzle about biscuits, the Guardian, *June 2008*

NON-LIBEL NEWS

MYSTERIOUS Nadhmi Auchi is continuing his campaign to wipe from the databases of the British media any mention of his links to Tony Rezko, the Barack Obama ally who is awaiting sentence on corruption charges in a Chicago prison (see last *Eye*).

The *Guardian* and *Observer* have already bowed to pressure from lawyers at Carter Fuck and removed from the web six pieces on the billionaire Iraqi oil and arms dealer's activities, while the *Times* has added "clarifications" to its reports. Now the *New Statesman* has also bowed to pressure after Carter Fuck told the weekly it was libellous to describe Auchi on its website as a "convicted fraudster".

Auchi *is* a convicted fraudster, however. In 2003 he was extradited to France where a court ruled that he had received £1m in illegal commissions as the French oil giant Elf paid out vast sums in bribes. The judges gave him a 15-month suspended sentence and a £1.5m fine.

Ah, Carter Fuck retorted, it is still libellous to call him a "fraudster" because he says he's innocent. Unless the *Staggers* altered its web report to say that although Auchi does have a fraud conviction, he insists he is a respectable man and is appealing to the European Court of Human Rights, Carter Fuck would sue.

The weekly duly modified its report to describe Auchi as "an Iraqi billionaire convicted of fraud in France".

TV

Britain's Lost World (BBC1)
Tribal Wives (BBC2)

ONE of the prestige series of the 1960s and 70s – ITV at its most BBC – was Granada's *Disappearing World*, a camera-ready version of *National Geographic* magazine which revealed the remote landscapes and peoples of the world, provoking the BBC to make an imitation programme, *Under the Sun*.

When the drongo tribes of popularisers hit the medium in the 90s, however, this kind of anthropological documentary disappeared. But, since the success of Bruce Parry's *Tribe* – in which an Indy Jones type stayed in huts and knocked back cocktails of burned leaf and snake semen – such films have made a comeback as a sub-genre of reality TV, and the BBC launched one on each of its main channels within a 24-period last week.

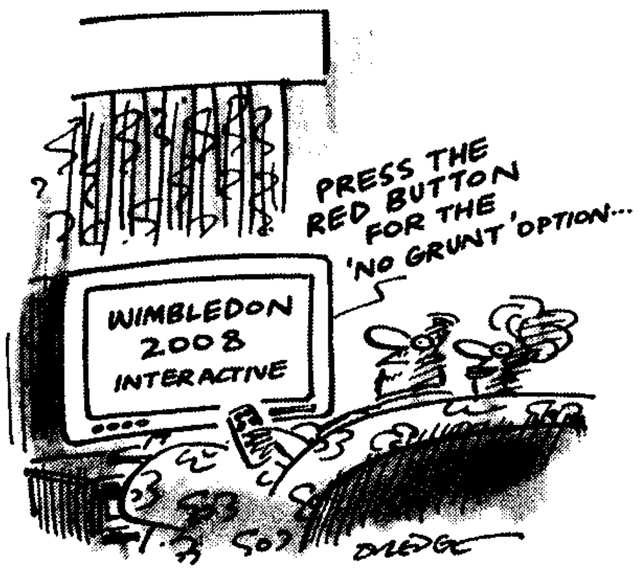
Apart from representing the return of the anthrop-doc, **Britain's Lost World** is also an example of telly's new obsession with titles. The preview DVDs sent out to hacks were called *Wilderness: St Kilda* and, at the end, co-host Kate Humble begins a trailer with the words: "Next week on *Wilderness: St Kilda*..."

In the credits, continuity announcements and *Radio Times*, however, the series has this new, presumably last-minute name. We can only guess that execs are so jittery that, following the success of ITV's *Britain's Got Talent*, they are desperate to get a nationality stamp on every series.

The title is dodgy, anyway, because, although the opening voiceover hams it up about this Scottish island being "one of the most remote places in the world" and the programme frequently refers to the "mystery" of why it's uninhabited, the truth is that the last residents left in the 20th century after concluding it was impossible to settle. But we're probably lucky it isn't called *Britain's Got Talons*, as one third of the programme consists of Kate Humble investigating the wildlife of St Kilda.

Humble's understandable joy at no longer being shackled to Bill Oddie, her chippy *Springwatch* co-presenter, must soon have been tempered by the realisation that feminism hasn't broken out at the BBC, allowing her to host the show alone. For this one, she has two male bodyguards: climber Steve Backshall and tall historian Dan Snow.

The presentational equivalent of spread-betting, this approach is clearly supposed to increase the chances of viewers finding something they like, but we end up with very little of anything. Each host makes bitty contributions: Kate cuddling puffins, Steve shackling himself to a crag and Dan banging on about what the Kildans used to do and why they left.



The difficulty is that few of the sequences seem to have worked out as planned but, with the new post-scandal rules of transparency at the BBC, the makers dared not finesse or edit the mistakes. So a dive by Kate and a climb by Steve fizzle out when bad weather intervenes, and a doom-watch segment in which Kate explains how the puffins are starving to death because of a rise in water temperatures is wrecked when the bird selected as an example turns out to have an almost normal body weight.

If *Britain's Lost World* represents anthropology done in the manner of *Go with Noakes*, **Tribal Wives** is geographical factual film-making crossed with *Big Brother*. In this series, British women are flown thousands of miles to stay with remote tribes, or supposedly remote ones, anyway. The Waorani of Ecuador, featured in the second programme, are a sort of Adrian Chiles of tribes, having appeared on television so often that it would be no surprise if the elders had DVD adverts painted on their foreheads in woad.

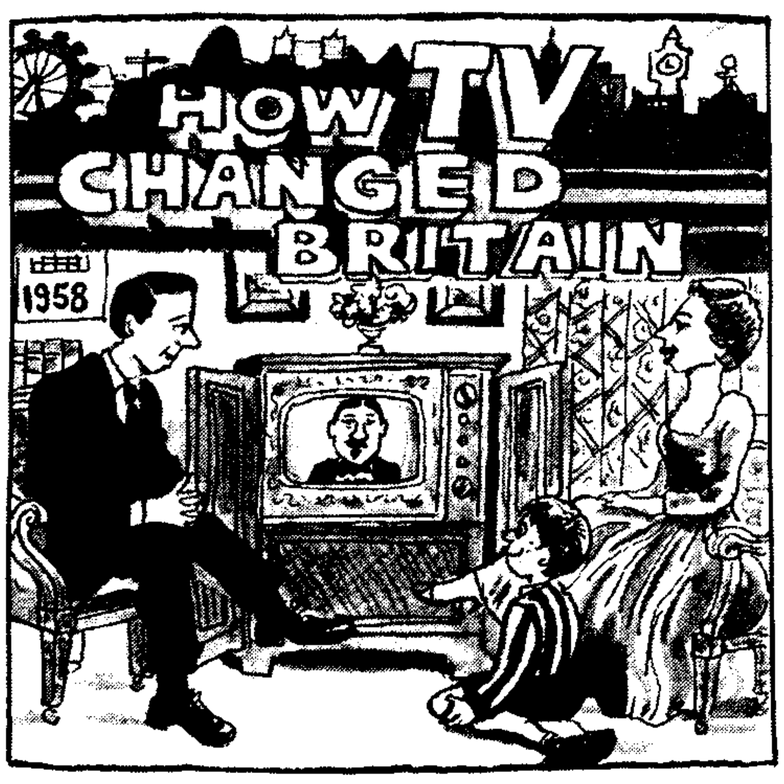
In the first edition, the host broadcasters were the Kuna Indians of Panama, who put up Sass, a thirtysomething newager from Oxford, for a month. Sass, traumatised by her parents' divorce and a string of failed relationships, travelled 5,000 miles to this "idyllic Caribbean island" to see what the women of the tribe could teach her about how to live her life.

It's interesting that this journey would never be contemplated in reverse because of the risk of exposing the Kuna to ridicule or illness, and the project can only be tolerated in this form because of a wishy-washy belief that the peoples of the undeveloped world possess a deeper wisdom about life.

Sass's Panamanian sisters under the skin told her that she needed to get herself a man and take things less seriously, which seems unlikely to have differed much from the advice regularly offered to her in Oxford. And if she'd stayed there, she wouldn't have had to drink the truth potion, made from hallucinogens and spit, which she was offered in the obligatory stomach-churning sequence.

Pretending that the places they go to are far less accessible than they really are – Humble notes with apparent surprise that there are "no hotels on St Kilda", although the voiceover has set it up as the end of the earth – these anthropop-docs are shallow and patronising. At least the Kildans had left before the telly bods arrived, but the Kuna deserve better than to be used as exotic agony aunts.

'Remote Controller'



MEDIA NEWS

TEHRAN TV

ALTHOUGH Britain is in a cold war with Iran, the contrasting fate of Iranian journalists in London shows that the last people to know it occupy senior positions in the Metropolitan Police and Foreign Office.

You would never guess that Iran had held British sailors hostage or supplied the weapons that killed British troops in Basra from the official indulgence shown to Press TV, the state-funded international network of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's regime. It operates out of studios in Ealing, right next door to Hamas TV. Inevitably, George Galloway's gorgeous face is on frequent display, but the Iranians have also persuaded British journalists to front shows. Andrew Gilligan hosts one discussion programme, while the former Taliban captive turned Islamist Yvonne Ridley hosts a second.

Behind the cover of impartiality that Gilligan and other ingénues provide, the station works hard to promote links between white neo-fascists and the Islamist far right. The Iranians have teamed up with the former model Lady Renouf (née Michele Mainwaring), and the reasons for the mutual attraction are obvious. When her friend David Irving faced charges of Holocaust denial in Austria, Renouf called for "so-called Holocaust victims to be exhumed to see whether they died from typhoid or gas". She attended the Holocaust denial conference in Tehran and enthused about Ahmadinejad's "open, democratic approach". She then suggested to Press TV that it give airtime to another neo-Nazi, Nicholas Kollerstrom, who was forced out of an honorary position at University College, London, for not only denying that the Nazis implemented an extermination campaign but adding for good measure that Islamists did not plant the 7/7 bombs in London. (MI5 massacred its own people, apparently, then fitted up innocent jihadis.)

Although Britain has financial sanctions against Iran, no action has been taken to stem the flow of funds from Tehran to the station. Fair enough, you might think, as we believe in freedom of speech in this country. But when it comes to the enemies of theocratic rule, British liberalism is nowhere to be seen.

Press has a rival: Your TV, which has been broadcasting from London since 2002. It supports the overthrow of the mullahs and hopes that one day Iran will be a democratic country with a constitutional monarchy, rather like ours. The authorities, however, can't see the similarity. In 2005, the Met raided the home of its founder, Frood Fouladvand. Coincidentally, the police action occurred on the same day in 2005 that Iran was holding a rigged election.

Fouladvand is an Iranian atheist who denounces what has been done to his country in the name of religion. Death threats from Iran and Hezbollah have followed. Far from saying that Britain is a free country where people are entitled to denounce religion if they wish, the Foreign Office has bent over backwards to placate the mullahs.

Reuters quoted the British embassy in Tehran as saying: "The British government does not share Mr Fouladvand's views. We deplore any attacks on Islam... We condemn those who stir up division."

A harsher condemnation awaits Fouladvand, too. In 2007, he visited Turkey and was lured to the border with Iran on the promise of meeting members of the underground opposition. No one in the west has seen him since, and his colleagues told the *Eye* they were sure he was being held in Iran and faced imminent execution.

If the regime does kill him, Press TV is unlikely to broadcast protests.

'Ratbiter'

IF *Sky News* presenter Kay Burley's behaviour at Naomi Campbell's court hearing – slamming a photographer up against a wall and holding her by the throat, as captured by Sky's own cameras – was meant to convince the model she was a kindred spirit, it appeared to work.

Within hours Campbell was revealing her claim that she had only assaulted two police officers after being called a "golliwog supermodel" in an exclusive interview with… Burley.

Uncharacteristically the latter opted to remain off-camera during the encounter – presumably to hide the black eye she claims to have received during her own on-air rage incident. Something else which went unseen by *Sky News* viewers was the presenter's hard-hitting opening to her interview with Campbell: "Gosh, you're *so* beautiful…"

THERE has been much condemnation in the press of the BBC's extravagant plans for its coverage of the Beijing Olympics at a time when the corporation is making 1,800 staff redundant. Yet its equally extravagant coverage of the European football championships has gone unnoticed.

First the Beeb rented the sizeable top floor of a lawyer's firm in the heart of Vienna for two months, gutted it and transformed it into its broadcast studio for the tournament.

Then BBC Sport set up its office at the International Broadcast Centre in the Austrian capital. The Beeb has the biggest office space of any single broadcaster at the centre, even dwarfing that of the Austrians and Swiss who are co-hosting the tournament. Though the Dutch started as favourites to win Euro 2008, the BBC still has around 15 times more office space than the Netherlands' broadcaster, NOS.

This empire building might appear commendable were it not for the small fact that England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales all failed to qualify for Euro 2008 and so the BBC had to take up its extensive residence at the International Broadcast Centre without a single home team for viewers to support.

THE BBC Trust's keenness to grovel before the corporation's critics has again been seen in its immediate approval of the report by Anthony King that concluded that the Beeb had "failed to keep up with the scale of change that devolution has brought about".

The trust decided that the report, based on four whole weeks of "monitoring" by the University of Cardiff, revealed that "BBC News had failed to respond adequately to huge social, political and economic changes that have been taking place" in the regions.

News editors were baffled to find that the expensive beefing up of newsrooms in Glasgow, Belfast and Cardiff, extra coverage of regional assemblies, a permanent Welsh-speaking reporter at Westminster and a massive shift of a large slice of its broadcasting to Manchester had not featured in the trust's reaction to the report.

The small print revealed that King himself had accepted that the research from Cardiff clearly showed the BBC's performance was actually "consistently superior" to that of other broadcasters in regional news.

THE essential qualification to be a top manager at GMTV is to be a nice person, as the *Eye* has chronicled over the years. So it's a real pity to mark the departure of warm-hearted Rhian Walker, finance director of the scandal-hit breakfast station.

The pressure of being the chief bean-counter, who saw the main profit driver – phone-in competitions – fall from her grasp when the regulator so inconsiderately insisted that they actually be fair, has become too much for this sensitive soul.

Readers may recall how she verbally abused a young runner when she was in desperate need of a cab, having found herself not unreasonably tired and emotional after a late night, er, management meeting. Only after the *Eye* ran the story did managing director Clive Crouch give her a supportive chat about how it was best practice not to alienate the people who actually produce what passes for current affairs television these days.

Sad to say, she was soon in trouble again, when a young secretary complained to management that Walker had hit her. Doubtless it was all a misunderstanding and Walker was just trying to pat the woman on the back. But she was given gardening leave, and has now agreed to walk away with a large amount of money in return for not telling the media where GMTV's bodies are buried.

"I would like to thank Rhian for her contribution over the years," Crouch told staff, "and wish her well for the future." His promise to pay back TV viewers who felt cheated over the competitions scandal was just as sincere, though no figures have been made available as to how much money has been returned to the GMTV audience.

DUMB BRITAIN

The Weakest Link, BBC1

Anne Robinson: In the New Testament the gospels are attributed to Mark, Luke, John and who else?

Contestant: Jesus.

Are You Smarter Than a 10-Year-Old?, Sky One

Presenter: On what day do Christians commemorate Jesus being nailed to the cross?

Contestant: I think it's Good Friday or the Bank Holiday weekend which ends on the Sunday.

Presenter: Along with two fishes, how many loaves of bread did Jesus use to feed the five thousand?

Contestant: When this question first came up, I thought four, but now I think it may have been six. It could have been eight, but now 14 seems to ring a bell.

WHO is behind the proposed revival of ancient ITV gameshow *Double Your Money*? Step forward Ant and Dec, the cheeky Geordie funsters who fronted last year's "serious cultural failure within ITV" which resulted in viewers of programmes *Ant and Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway* and *Ant and Dec's Gameshow Marathon* being conned out of several million pounds (although executive producers Ant and Dec at no time knew anything about it).

PANTOMIME WEDDING

Of course, they're not putting the whole thing together by themselves. A "key part in negotiations" is being played by Russ Lindsay, the partner in James Grant Media who represents both the pair and mooted "new Hughie Green" Richard Madeley.

Lindsay is also the co-founder and creative director of Riva Digital Media, a company which provides "TV telephony and cutting edge telecommunications" to clients including *X-Factor*, which last year had to pay back £900,000 to viewers whose premium rate phone votes had been charged for but not counted.

With a team as good as that in charge, surely it should be re-named *Triple Your Money?*

MORE on shameless prop suppliers breaking BBC guidelines by boasting about the branded goods they manage to place on TV (see last *Eye*).

BBC rules state that branded products should only be used if "clearly editorially justified". But how the prominent appearance of a Polycom conference phone in an episode of *The Mighty Boosh* last year was "editorially justified" remains unclear: it was not used or referred to during the entire programme, despite sitting in clear view.

Viewers can see just how irrelevant conference phones were to the plotline in a video on the website of the proud supplier, Brand Exposure (www.brand-exposure.co.uk/place-246-boosh.html). Despite the evidence, a BBC spokesperson refused to admit that Auntie's rules had once again been well and truly broken by greedy admen.

LUVVIES

So he was never curious about testing his courage on the battlefield? "You can do that on stage." Without bullets? "Oh, but there are! Critics can kill." Hardly the same. "It is the same! Exactly the same!"

RUPERT EVERETT, replying to interviewer's queries regarding his interest in military service, Sunday Telegraph.

Submitted by Dawn C. Kelly.

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

MEDICINE BALLS

Ben Bradshaw's Fan Club

"Dear Ben Bradshaw. Regarding your recent comments about the BMA Save Our Surgery campaign having a 'misleading and mendacious nature'. Fuck off, you ugly, duplicitous cunt."

THIS top-quality posting (373 votes and counting) on 12 June from Stephen O'Hanlon, a London trainee surgeon, appeared on the "Air Your Views to the Media" forum of Doctors.net.uk, "the largest professional forum of UK doctors."

Other doctors quickly weighed in with their views on the health minister too: "Floppy-haired cuntistic fuckwit" (from a consultant psychiatrist); "liar", "ignorant pain in the arse" and "odious little creep" (from three GPs). Bradshaw, who sees himself as a mini Milburn enforcer, would doubtless be delighted with the feedback. But why do doctors dislike him so much?

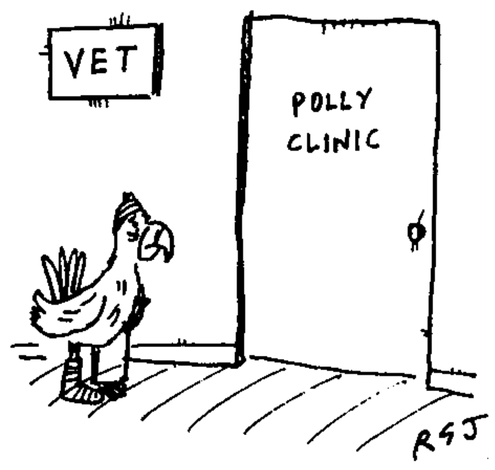
Bradshaw was wheeled out to defuse the BMA's petition of 1.2m patient signatures, gathered in just three weeks, opposing polyclinic plans that threaten thousands of GP surgeries. Bradshaw was unimpressed: "I am not surprised the BMA have collected so many signatures given the misleading and mendacious nature of their campaign. If I were to run a campaign making false claims that something terrible was about to happen, a lot of people would sign my petition too."

So after 11 years of "new" Labour and a year of Lord Darzi running around the UK trying to engage and inspire NHS staff, politicians and doctors still hate each other. With such a dysfunctional relationship at the centre of the NHS, it's no wonder the UK still has such poor health outcomes.

General practice certainly needs some help: some deprived areas are very under-doctored and the quality of service is distinctly variable. Most doctors (and many patients) would rather the government invested in and expanded existing services rather than introduce large, often privately owned, health centres; but Labour is determined to have some more shiny buildings to show off come election time, never mind the quality.

Labour's claims that having a polyclinic on your doorstep will not affect the viability of existing GP practices is clearly nonsense. As with independent sector treatment centres (ISTCs), the private sector is very good at creaming off "easy" patients and leaving the NHS to pick up all the difficult ones. With a recession looming, money is tight enough in the NHS without splashing out on 150 new clinics. And with a finite number of GPs to go around, polyclinics can only be staffed by importing doctors from abroad or poaching them from neighbouring practices.

M.D. has written at length about the problems of ISTCs failing to follow up on their patients, but continuity is even more central to general practice. Patients, particularly those with chronic illnesses, value relationships built up over time and there's a limit to what you can achieve in six minutes with a stranger. Even more problematic for Labour's plans is Lord Darzi's assertion that all reform must be based on evidence, and evidence for the value of polyclinics over traditional general practice does not exist, according to the King's Fund, the independent health charity.



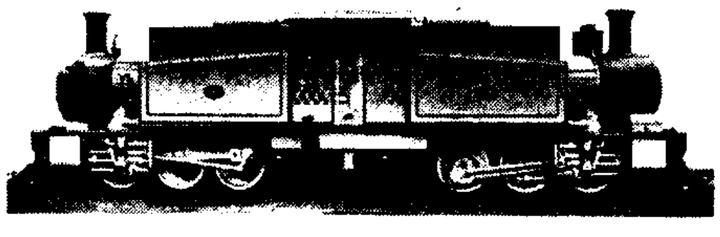
Some GP practices have relocated to larger centres and are delivering excellent, expanded services, but the move was their decision and they have ensured that continuity has not been disrupted. But most GPs are sitting tight and ignoring Labour. As one put it: "There's no point engaging with the fag end of a government. Soon the Tories will be in, they'll reintroduce fund holding and we'll be back where we started in 1997." Ah, the smell of progress.

M.D.

OH, YEAH? **"There is a tentatively enthusiastic welcome to a super surgery or polyclinic..."**

– Health Secretary Alan Johnson debating in the Commons

SIGNAL FAILURES



Electric blues

NEANDERTHAL brains in Whitehall are slowly starting to accept the benefits of railway electrification, "slowly" being the key word.

"I believe the business and environmental case for electrification is growing fast," Transport Secretary Ruth Kelly said this month. The case for electrification has actually existed for decades; but while other European countries continued to electrify, Britain stopped when mandarins chose to fragment and privatise the railway instead.

After privatization the business case for electrification still remained (electric trains were simpler, lighter, more efficient and more reliable); but electrifying a route now needed complex agreements between infrastructure owner, transient train operator and train leasing company. With no leadership in the industry, each followed its own narrow, short-term commercial agenda.

Two decades of electrification progress, skills and equipment have now been lost in Britain, as demonstrated over new year when Network Rail was so short of power-line engineers it cancelled one job yet still suffered humiliating over-runs on the west-coast and Liverpool Street lines (*Eye* 1201). But, in reality, the government couldn't care less about the skills shortage and has no intention of resuming electrification: the Treasury is far too fond of the cash it earns from transport oils (and has steadily raised duty on railway diesel – *Eye* 1155). To give the *impression* it's serious about "low carbon" transport, it is now trying to make people think rail electrification is imminent. It is not.

Ruth Kelly said, "We are going to step up our efforts through a cross-industry working group to re-examine the business case for electrification, explore how costs can be brought down much further and agree priority schemes. My aim is for this work to be completed later this year so we can make real progress in laying down our longer-term plans for the railways."

Yeah, right: meanwhile, hundreds more diesel-powered carriages (with 30-year lifespans) will be procured. Tougher emissions standards will raise diesel-engine construction costs, and banks could insist on recouping more of their outlay in the early years in case the oil market makes the new trains uneconomic to run after 10 or 20 years. Kelly's dimwitted officials are still trying to persuade manufacturers and financiers to produce a future diesel-powered intercity train, which will be costly because any such design is specific to Britain: other large countries won't want it because they've electrified their mainlines.

Dithering on electrification costs Britain dear, but the government sees no harm in procrastination because fares can keep rocketing – to cover rising costs and to ration rail travel according to the limited capacity available on such an expensive network.

POLICE investigating a terror suspect now charged with planning a bombing asked FirstGroup to see CCTV footage from the company's buses in Bristol. The public-spirited company (profit last year: £360m) said yes... and later sent Inspector Knacker a £125,000 bill for the evidence it had supplied. As its statement on corporate policy bollocks says: "FirstGroup strives to be a good corporate citizen and to fulfil our responsibilities to the societies and communities in which we operate."

PS: Transport journalist Christian Wolmar inadvertently contributed further to FirstGroup's profits when he made a BBC TV documentary about First Great Western. He needed a ticket to show disbelieving viewers that a London-Cardiff return really does cost £158 (bog standard class). Although his ticket was fully refundable, FGW refused to pay back the money because he'd taken the ticket on to the station platform for filming.

'Dr B. Ching'

ECO SOUNDINGS

THE BBC is proud of its environmental policy. The corporation's website affirms its commitment to tackling green issues. It grandly notes: "Our vision is to be the most creative and trusted organisation in the world. Environmental management is integral to this vision... Our overall objective is to carry out our operations in a way which manages and minimises any adverse environmental impact and demonstrates pollution prevention."

Er, unfortunately these noble principles don't seem to have reached Broadcasting House. Indeed, during its costly renovation the corporation's green policies appear to have been overlooked, and the gleaming new building has been kitted out with an air-conditioning system designed for large industrial factory sites. In recent weeks, this has led to a farcical battle of wits between gloomy employees and a junior manager called Hilary Birch.

Problems began when the vastly over-powered cooling system turned BH into an icebox. Vents belched freezing cold air over staff unlucky enough to have their desks beneath them. People started to grumble about their joints seizing up, and some even developed rheumatoid conditions. Then, one enterprising employee stole the sole window key to the second floor, allowing all the windows to be opened to let in some much needed warm air. Unfortunately, this pushed the air-conditioning system into overdrive, burning even greater amounts of energy to cool a building whose windows were wide open.

This is when things turned nasty. Ms Birch started sending threatening emails round the building demanding the return of the key so the windows could be locked. Nothing happened; so in retaliation Birch had the whole system turned off, just as the weather warmed up. Soon, staff were fainting in the heat.

Another missive issued an ultimatum for the key to be returned to Ms Birch by lunchtime on 11 June. No joy; so a few hours later she sent yet another email, whining: "Sadly, the key has not turned up in my pigeonhole. This is, as you will appreciate, very disappointing. The selfish action of one person is causing distress to colleagues not only on the second floor but to the rest of the building."

Threatening disciplinary procedures, loss of anonymity protection for the guilty party and various other sanctions, the email charmingly invited employees to "continue to stew or freeze as the case may be". This seemed to do the trick, and the key was eventually returned. Good to see the BBC's visionary approach to simple environmental, health and safety management is in such good hands...

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

DEVELOPERS FIRST

SIR SIMON MILTON, former leader of Westminster council, seems to have softened his view of the less-well-off since he put his hand up as a member of Shirley Porter's housing committee and voted to house homeless families in asbestos-ridden tower blocks.

Now chairman of the Local Government Association and special adviser on planning to London mayor Boris Johnson, Sir Simon made a speech last week warning that the credit crunch and already long waiting lists could mean families whose homes were repossessed might have to wait up to six years before being rehoused in a decent home.

His audience, which included housing minister Caroline Flint, heard that one solution would be to lift restrictions on borrowing so councils could "invest in building or buying new homes for those who need them most". But is Sir Simon himself in favour of "building" – ie a massive programme of new council houses – or "buying" – ie throwing a taxpayer-funded lifeline to developers suffering from the private sector housing slump?

Last week Boris and Sir Simon met representatives of some of Britain's biggest landlords and property developers to discuss "development and social housing". On Wednesday the mayor attended an invitation-only event at the Royal Bank of Scotland's City HQ organised by the business lobbying group London First, whose members include Argent, British Land, Grosvenor, Land Securities and Westfield. And on Friday Sir Simon had a breakfast Q&A session with members of London First.

No registered social landlords (RSLs) or charitable organisation was invited, despite their involvement in social housing in London. But then attendance was limited to members of London First, membership of which costs £13,500. Taking a keen interest, no doubt, is Harvey McGrath, former chairman of Man Group fund managers, who was appointed chairman of the London Development Agency by Boris earlier this month. On taking up the LDA job, McGrath stepped down as chairman of… London First.

Asked why no RSL was invited, a Borisperson said: "The mayor is committed to building 50,000 affordable homes over the next three years and will shortly be outlining his vision for amending the London Plan to achieve this, as well as holding major talks with leading RSLs and housing charities in the coming weeks to inform his strategy." At least he talks to the right people first…

● SO HOW does Sir Simon Milton's own council address low-income families' housing needs? *Eye* 1211 told how elderly residents of Dudley House, a Westminster-council owned block of flats, who bought their homes under right-to-buy, were being shoddily treated by the council, which wants them out so the site can be turned into luxury flats. Meanwhile 27 tenants on the Blandford Estate, Marylebone, are celebrating after the Leasehold Valuation Tribunal (LVT) ruled that a £500,000 bill they received for roof repairs to two blocks of flats was completely unjustified. The bill, from CityWest Homes, which runs Westminster's social housing, would have seen each household having to stump-up £18,000. The "roof repairs" turned out to include costs towards the CityWest staff pension scheme, mobile phone bills and, er, staff Christmas party.

BLURRED VISION

SO. FAREWELL then Brendan Arnold, head-hunted by Birmingham city council to oversee the introduction of the much-vaunted Voyager computerised invoice system, which resulted in a shambles of 30,000 unpaid bills (*Eye* 1203). As "director of corporate finance" Arnold was responsible for Brum's "business transformation programme", which he claimed would save the council £1bn over 10 years.

Despite continuing complaints from staff about the shortcomings of Voyager, Arnold is not leaving because of the dog's dinner he has created but because he has landed a top job in London working for "Communities and Local Government" – as the department of communities, etc, now ungrammatically styles itself. Arnold's departure was announced as Phase 2 of Voyager goes live, which will see – horror of horrors – managers having to manage their own budgets.

Mr Arnold was evidently held in high esteem, as in the wake of his departure Brum is advertising for no fewer than seven assistant directors of finance, on salaries of up to £85,000 each. All are expected to be "visionary business leaders with drive and determination". More "vision" – just what's needed to pay the bills!

● MORE evidence of how Labour has lost touch with ordinary people. In May *Eye* 1210 told how Peter Thirlwall, a Labour councillor in Rotherham, had suggested that councillors might set an example by halving the amount spent on junkets (around £60,000 a year) in order to avoid cuts in grants to voluntary groups. He noted that the council had spent £7,400 on a jolly to London to attend an awards ceremony while withdrawing a similar sum that kept the local talking-books-for-the-blind service going. Alas he failed to get a seconder. After the *Rotherham Advertiser* ran the story it was flooded with letters condemning the Labour group's priorities. So embarrassing was this that Cllr Thirlwall has been hauled before the chief whip and accused of "bringing the party into disrepute". He tells the *Eye*: "It isn't me that's brought the party into disrepute; they've done that themselves. I won't be apologizing." He will learn his fate on 1 July.

PRICE OF PROTEST

SPITE is also the order of the day in Salford where, *Eye* 1203 reported, the Labour council threatened to charge children from St George's primary school, which is facing the axe, for the cost of a road closure if they marched in protest.

The 1,000-strong demo duly went ahead. No one, as yet, has paid the £1,918.35 bill. A letter has arrived at the school threatening "county court proceedings" or "referral to a debt recovery agency". The council has bottled out of charging the 10-year-olds who organised the march and is going for the school governors instead.

Council leader John Merry says the charges weren't intended to stifle protest: "There isn't a price on democracy, there's a price on closing a particular road." Yet since the demo in February there have been several parades in Salford involving road closures, without any charge being levied, including the St George's Day parade, the Whit Walks and the Mayor's Parade. Ah, say, councillors, these are all "traditional" events. Interesting to note that peaceful protest is no longer a "tradition" tolerated by the Labour party.

SHROPSHIRE BAD

IS THERE anywhere the outsourcing tentacles of Westminster council's "communications" team, headed by Alex "Chicken-Wrestler" Aiken, do not reach?

After Richmond, Merton, Hillingdon and the Isle of Wight, WCC has added Southwark council to its portfolio. Westminster was brought in to conduct a "review" of the Lib-Dem/Tory council's PR machine last year after it was revealed the council was spending more than £5m on spin – which clearly wasn't working. More than 20 jobs were duly axed. Westminster has now found Southwark a dynamic new communications supremo: one Paul Masterman, formerly of Shropshire county council.

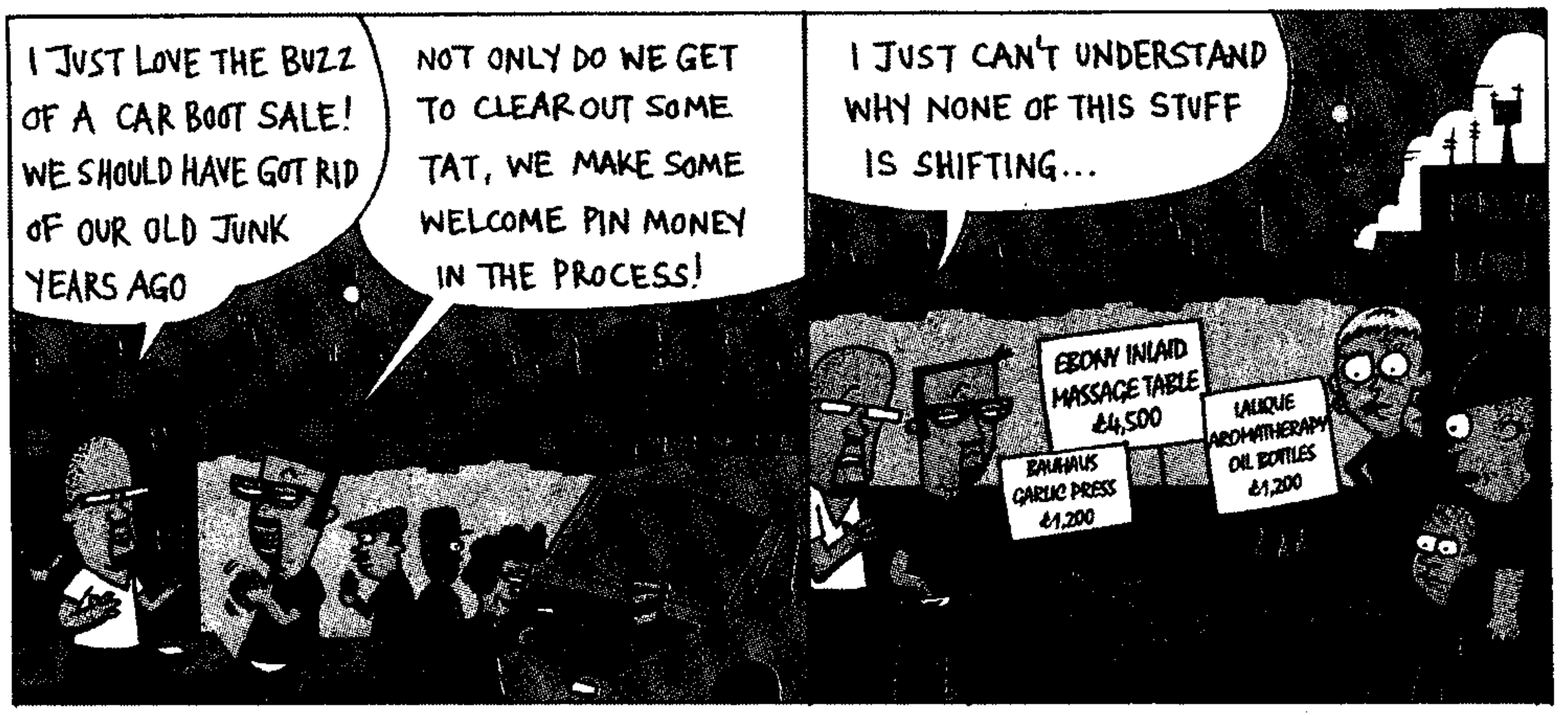
Masterman sounds just the man for the job. He left Shropshire last year after being caught instructing council employees how to cheat in an online poll. BBC Shropshire had organised the survey to gauge local opinion on whether the county and district councils should merge into a "unitary" authority (the government subsequently decided they should). In furthering the county council's campaign in favour, Masterman encouraged hundreds of council employees to vote Yes – and explained to them how to bypass the BBC website's "cookies" set up to prevent multiple voting. Masterman was suspended and resigned before a disciplinary process was completed. Perhaps Southwark could put him in charge of postal voting.

● ACCORDING to a Blaenau Gwent council newsletter: "Blaina is looking ahead to the Youth of Blaina (YOB) celebration in August."

Might be one to miss…

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

KNIFE & PACKER


I JUST LOVE THE BUZZ OF A CAR BOOT SALE! WE SHOULD HAVE GOT RID OF OUR OLD JUNK YEARS AGO
NOT ONLY DO WE GET TO CLEAR OUT SOME TAT, WE MAKE SOME WELCOME PIN MONEY IN THE PROCESS!
I JUST CAN'T UNDERSTAND WHY NONE OF THIS STUFF IS SHIFTING...
EBONY INLAID MASSAGE TABLE £4,500
BAUHAUS GARLIC PRESS £1,200
LALIQUE AROMATHERAPY OIL BOTTLES £1,200

NOOKS and CORNERS

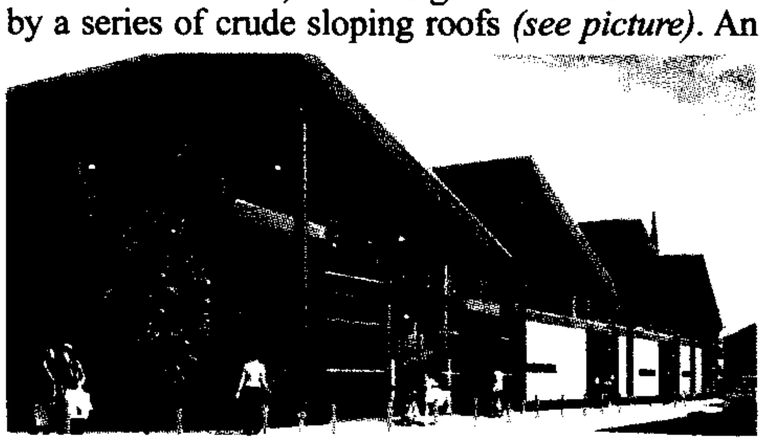
GIVEN the national anxiety over the future of Stonehenge, what Tesco is proposing to do nearby – create a distribution centre which will bring even more heavy traffic thundering past the ancient monument – is bad enough. But what the supermarket giant wants to do over at Hadleigh in Suffolk is even worse.

Norman Scarfe's Shell Guide is ecstatic about this "Antique market-town", remarking on the "remarkable group of late medieval buildings" at the end of Church Street and finding the whole place "full of interest and pleasure". Furthermore, the town is still full of small, thriving local shops and only one supermarket; and the people of Hadleigh don't seem to want another. But Tesco knows better!

A 3,000m^2 store – larger than the entire floor area of *all* the shops in the old High Street – is proposed at the former Brett Works between the High Street and river, together with the usual car parks. The necessary access road requires the demolition of Bridge House near the bridge: a sober, handsome (unlisted) red brick building of 1861 which was the former office of Hadleigh's gas works.

The store, to be built next to water meadows on a flood plain close to the historic centre and the church, will have a devastating effect on the town's economy, leading to the inevitable closure of smaller shops, and will encourage yet more car journeys.

As for the supermarket itself, the new Tesco is to be a banal red brick, steel and glass structure covered by a series of crude sloping roofs *(see picture)*. An



architect is recorded: Messrs Lyons, Sleeman & Hoare of Hartley Wintney, Hants; and Tesco proudly claims that "We have moved away from our standard format store to a quality, bespoke design that will add to Hadleigh's rich heritage". Really?

Hadleigh remains unimpressed. In April, town councillors voted against the supermarket proposal by a majority of 12 to 1, while 95 percent of residents who responded to the Hands off Hadleigh campaign are also opposed. But, ultimately, Hadleigh is powerless to protect itself as the final decision will be taken by Babergh district council, whose members and planners seem greatly enamoured of Messrs Tesco. So much for local democracy.

English Heritage has voiced its opposition and its irritation that it was not involved in the discussions about building on such a sensitive site, especially as the building is 20 percent larger than anything envisaged in the local plan. "English Heritage is concerned that the development would have an impact on the conservation area; the long views to important listed buildings including St Mary's Church and that the demolition of Bridge House would disrupt the visual entrance to the historic core of Hadleigh… We… feel that the development of this site would introduce a radical change to the layout of this part of the historic core… The large car park is intrusive… The access road into the site from Bridge Street is also intrusive, with the same noise and lighting issues as the car park… Various views from the riverside are likely to be compromised…"

In short, it's not a great idea. But here's a curious thing. The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) – the Blairite quango, dominated by architects, that replaced the good old Royal Fine Art Commission – thinks Tesco's proposal simply wonderful. Indeed, its report reads like a Tesco press release. "We think that the provision of a supermarket on this site is a welcome facility for local shoppers… We congratulate Tesco for committing to build a bespoke solution and feel that this scheme, if our comments are taken on board, has every chance of becoming a successful example of how to treat supermarkets in sensitive environments".

Not that CABE considered Hadleigh terribly important or sensitive: it has since emerged that not a single member of its review panel bothered to visit the town beforehand and that the report was written by a "case officer". Tesco, of course, is delighted and can now claim its proposals have been "commended" by the government's official advisers on design.

One can only wonder why CABE should go out of its way to commend a scheme hardly anybody in the old and beautiful market town of Hadleigh seems to want and which most responsible commentators think is as destructive as it is mediocre.

HUDDERSFIELD is very different from Hadleigh, but has its merits, one being the Queensgate Market Hall.

Although built at in inauspicious time – 1970 – it is rather special, being covered with remarkable asymmetrical paraboloid concrete shell roofs and containing ceramic relief sculptures by Fritz Steller. In 1975 the great Ian Nairn thought it "a marvellously human place, the opposite of most indoor shopping centres" and in 2005 it was listed. At the same time, the nearby late 1930s stripped Classical Library and Art Gallery was also listed. And now Kirklees council proposes to demolish more than a third of the Market Hall to build a shopping mall, relegating the market to a curtailed upstairs space above new shopping "units".

This crude scheme shows no consciousness of the importance of civic space and public buildings. Meanwhile, the old Library will be converted for "commercial and leisure purposes". Is there no end to the stupidity of local authorities and the tyranny of shopping?

'Piloti'

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS

BY BIRCH

This exciting new art festival could transform this sleepy, forgotten seaside town...
FOLKESTONE TRIENNIAL
TRACEY EMIN
MARK WALLINGER ETC.
Into another Brighton...
Or even Hoxton!

Down on the Fish Farm

FEW images are more calculated to tug an animal lover's heart strings than that of a baby seal, particularly if it is about to be shot. It might come as a shock to learn, therefore, that in the western highlands of Scotland seals are being routinely shot to protect farmed salmon, with the full blessing of Britain's leading animal charity, the RSPCA.

The Norwegian-owned firm Marine Harvest (*Eyes passim*), supplier to Sainsbury's, which retails 27 percent of all farmed salmon sold in the UK, recently admitted that seals are shot on its fish farms – even though it operates under the RSPCA's Freedom Food scheme, which supposedly guarantees that all its animals are "free from fear, distress, pain, injury and disease, and that they should be free to express normal behaviour".

This is just the latest embarrassment surrounding the RSPCA's scheme, launched in 1994 as its largest commercial enterprise and now covering a fifth of all the farm animals in Britain. Freedom Food's original purpose was to guarantee that all eggs sold under its label were free-range. But this didn't prevent charges soon being made that many of these so-called free-range eggs came from farms no better than industrial battery units.

In 2001 Freedom Food was relaunched by the then-agriculture minister Margaret Beckett. The fast-food chain McDonald's announced that it would be stamping its takeaway cartons with the Freedom Food logo, which it earned by donating 4p to the RSPCA for every 30 dozen free-range eggs it bought. But unfortunately this coincided with a devastating BBC *Watchdog* documentary, showing scenes of animals in distress filmed undercover at several Freedom Food-approved farms. Members of the charity's council admitted that it was hard to run the scheme efficiently when it had only 28 inspectors to monitor 9m animals. The RSPCA protested to Ofcom but, in dismissing all its complaints, Ofcom agreed that "the charity has been compromised by its involvement with a scheme that embraced the practices of the intensive farming industry".

In 2007 another exposé followed on ITV's *Tonight With Trevor McDonald*, again showing sickening shots of ducks and other animals on farms whose welfare standards were approved by Freedom Food. By now, according to a former RSPCA council member Celia Hammond, the scheme's full-time inspectorate was down to ten. Even Jackie Ballard, the RSPCA's then-chief executive, had to admit that the filmed evidence of animals suffering was "not good enough", but blustered: "We don't sit on a farm 24 hours a day, so inevitably sometimes things will go wrong."

The next embarrassment was the much-touted alliance between Freedom Food and the TV celebrity foodie Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, prompting Tesco to accuse them of "hypocritical publicity-mongering". Hitting back at this assault, the celebrated upholder of all that is natural in the countryside is due to appear at Tesco's AGM on 27 June to assure shareholders that Freedom Food's farm welfare record has improved. He is unlikely to mention his ally's approval of the shooting of seals to protect Scottish fish farms.

Normally Freedom Food likes to assure consumers that its standards forbid the routine killing of predators. But faced with this new evidence, including film of a shot baby seal with its head chopped off, all an RSPCA spokesperson could say was: "There are times when farmers have to kill a persistent predator." There are also times when even the RSPCA gets so badly caught out that it cannot maintain its routine fictions any longer.

'Muckspreader'

Deer, redfish, tarpon, upland game birds and peasants — you name it, you can fish for it or shoot it at.

The Times

Letters

Own goal

Sir,

I expect and enjoy the usual healthy mix of sarcasm and piss-taking in your organ; however your dig at Paul Gascoigne ("Six Not To Watch", Eye 1212) I thought was in particularly poor taste, even for you lot.

Yours,
G. EARLY,

Huddersfield.

Canon balls

Sir,

*Moist with anticipation as I am at the Archbishop of York's bungee jump from the Minster Church of which I am a Residentiary Canon, and the ensuing tea and cakes at York Hospital A+E (Court Circular, Eye 1212), it will be the **Most** Reverend (and Right Honourable) John Sentamu who comes to earth with a bang, not the **Very** Reverend. Though of course, the Dean of York may wish to join him.*

CANON JEREMY FLETCHER,

York.

Second opinion

Sir,

Re Correct Diagnosis (Letters, Eye 1212).

I too respect the need for accuracy and I would like to point your correspondents on this topic to the research itself, the full title of which is: "Comparison of case-mix & patients' reports of outcome in Independent Sector Treatment Centres and NHS providers: prospective cohort study" (ISSN 1472-6973, published 9 April 2008).

This was indeed published in the BMC Health Services Research Journal but was, according to its cover sheet, research carried out by researchers drawn from the Research Unit of The London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and the Clinical Effectiveness Unit of the Royal College of Surgeons. It is – as the title says, "outcome research". It is categorically not patient satisfaction data, though I am glad the point has been raised as patient satisfaction is another area where ISTCs come out exceptionally well.

Regards,
DAVID WORSKETT,

Director – NHS Partner Network.

Meek and wild

Sir,

In his defence of Brian Souter, Phil Rowland (Eye 1212) claims that Jesus "never condemned anyone who got rich through honest trade or labour". However, during the Sermon on the Mount, in the well-known passage (Matt. 6:19 to 24) beginning "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth", Jesus finishes by saying "Ye cannot serve God and mammon", making it perfectly clear that it is not possible to pursue riches (honestly acquired or not) and at the same time serve God. Furthermore, after the passage referred to by Dr B. Ching (Eye 1211) concerning the young man who found it impossible to give up his wealth and possessions, Jesus says to his disciples: "Verily I say unto to you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." (Matt. 19:23/4). The implication this should have for a devout Christian such as Mr Souter is obvious.

Yours faithfully,
RONALD PETTIT,

Hampton, Middlesex.

Sir,

*If Phil Rowland (Eye 1212) really thinks that Jesus was perfectly OK with the amassing of material wealth just as long as it was legal, perhaps he should spend some time actually **reading** the Gospels rather than simply looking for loopholes.*

Ever since St Paul spin-doctored Christianity into a religion so respectable that you could bring it home to meet your accountant, Christians have had a terrible job attempting to square the faith they have inherited with the fiery radicalism of the original, sporadic wake-up calls from such as Tolstoy and St. Francis notwithstanding. To those who naively cling to the outdated notion that there should be at least some kind of connection between the Church's teachings and those of a first-century trouble-maker from Nazareth the sight of professed Christians, with or without the blessing of Inspector Knacker, filling their boots must seem, at the very least, profoundly incongruous.

Yours,
MIKE REVELL,

Via email.

Lookalike

Robson

Davis

Sir,

Couldn't help noticing today that David Davis is turning into Sir Bobby Robson.

STEPHEN HELICZER,

Via email.

Karate chopped

Sir,

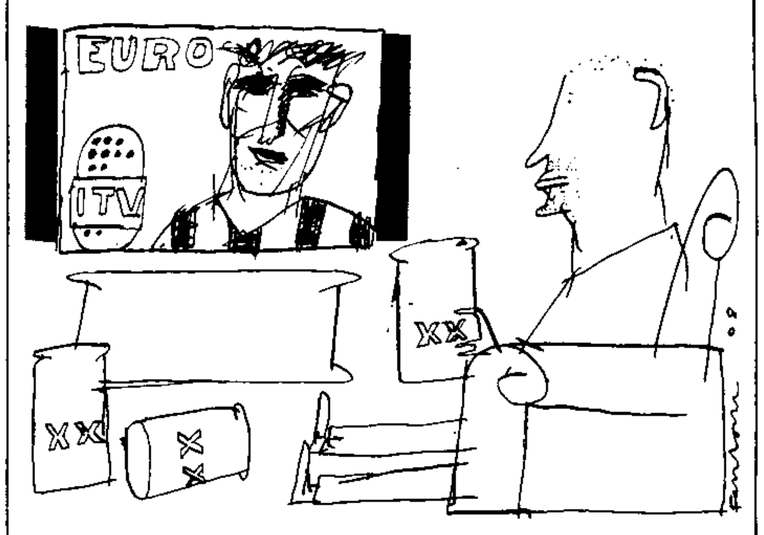
In the article entitled "Schmooze and Deliver" (In the Back, Eye 1211) I was most surprised to read that squash and karate are, according to your journalist, due to feature in the 2012 Olympic games. Is this a Private Eye exclusive?

The athletes, at least, should be told!

CHARLES RICHARDSON,

Via email.

Scenes You Seldom See



"Sure, all the lads played very well, but I'm obviously in a class of my own and without me this team would be nothing..."

Friendly bombs?

Sir,

Saddened but not surprised that the Slough Town Hall is under threat (Nooks & Corners, Eye 1211), despite being one of the few buildings in the town worth saving. There are worse precedents. One of Slough's few claims to fame before The Office was the fact that astronomer William Herschel lived there. I remember his house being reduced to rubble in the late 50s just in time for an American descendant to render visit and be greeted with a pile of bricks.

Plus ça change.
CHRIS BARNETT,

Tokyo, Japan.

African summit

Sir,

*So, Guto Harri spent an evening discussing Zimbabwe with pretty young girls, did he (Eye 1212)? Does this mean that discussing Uganda is **so** yesterday or is it something else entirely? Readers should be told.*

Yours faithfully,
PETER QUINN,

Helperby, N. Yorkshire.

Pregnant pause

Sir,

In Dundee, we have been told for years that we have the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in Europe, so it was interesting to read the letter from Steve Wilson saying that "Newham has the worst rate of unwanted teenage pregnancy in Britain" and probably held the European record. Does this mean that Dundee has lost the accolade, for teenage pregnancy or is it a different slant on the figures?

MAC DUNCAN,

Dundee.

Into the mystic

Sir,

The last part of your Hackwatch column (Eye 1212) is a bit unfair on Rees-Mogg.

Obama won his overall majority by lining up the "superdelegate" endorsements of party officials. He never did "win enough delegates in the remaining primaries", and neither of course did Hillary Clinton.

Were Rees-Mogg, as it often appears, reliably 100% wrong on every subject he would have immense value as a commentator. But this example shows that he can sometimes get things right, through the workings of dumb luck.

Which means, thankfully, that we can carry on ignoring him.

Best wishes,
ROB MEINHARD,

Via email.

The people's brew

Sir,

Given the end of the Diana inquest and the ensuing media silence on the matter, I thought it might hearten you – in the manner that only a good cup of tea can – to hear that she remains very close to the hart of Indian Railways.

This behemoth of rail networks, which transports seventeen million passengers a day, has chosen to honour the People's Princess with its brand of on-board tea. Through "Diana, Princess of Tea", she lives on in the Indian subcontinent even if certain newspapers and corner shop owners here in the UK have been quick to forget about her.

Sadly, I was unable to procure a supply for the delectation of the Eye staff, but hope this tea bag tag will whet your appetite, as it were.

Yours faithfully,
C.H. ROBERTS,
London N17.

Only chide

Sir,

You have persistent problems with the positioning of "only" in your sentences. A typical example appears on page three of your latest issue (1212): "But why did the talks only collapse... on 28 May?" So they only collapsed, did they, rather than, say, turn into a herd of wildebeests? What you mean is "the talks collapsed only on 28 May". I could quote numerous similar solecisms, but need to focus on going clubbing more often.

Now: which is better?

a) I will consider taking out a subscription only when your syntax improves.

b) I will only consider taking out a subscription when your syntax improves.

Yours didactically,
ADRIAN MANN,
Doncaster, S. Yorks.
PS: It's a).

Lookalike

British peer

Aboriginal authoress

Sir,

Remarkable – identical twins. Andrew Lloyd Webber and Alexis Wright.

LORNA KEMPSTER,
Royston, Herts.

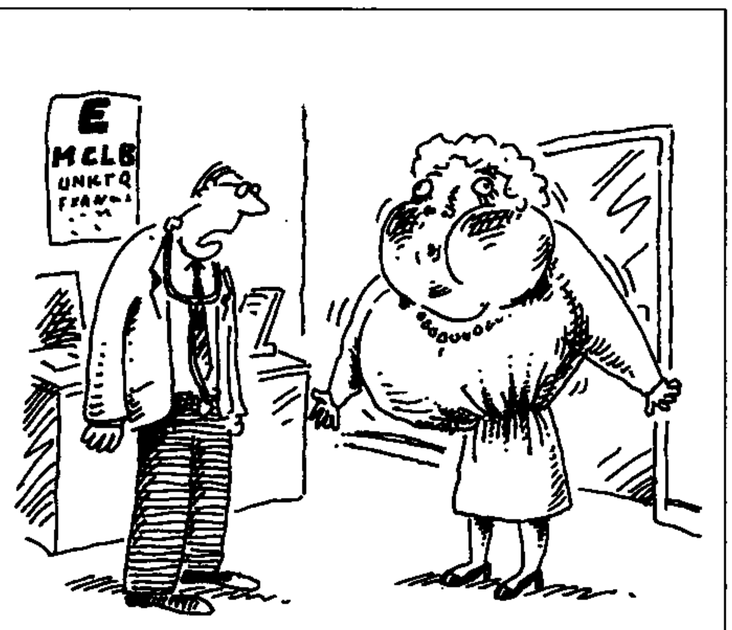
Photo opportunity

Sir,

I read with interest the news that Andrew Neill is heading up a consortium that has acquired the respected literary agency PFD for £4m.

With due respect for Mr Neill's long and stellar career in journalism and broadcasting, I am concerned that he may be lacking in experience when it comes to handling international talent. Do you have any evidence to the contrary?

EDWARD TUCKIN,
Nancledra, Cornwall.



"The gastric band doesn't seem to be working. We'd better try another method"

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"Tonight he became the man we've all been hoping he'd become – the man, in fact, that he has been for some time now."
MARTIN O'NEILL, BBC
(Bonnie Latimer)

"He was running quicker than his legs could go..."
STEVE McCLAREN, Radio 5 Live
(Brian Maynard)

"There were lots of examples of poor defending both prior to and preceding the goal."
GARY LINEKER, BBC1
(Matt Cooper)

"Sometimes your best shot can be your Hercules' heel."
GEOFF BOYCOTT, Radio 5 Live
(Les McLeod)

*"The defender was literally – **literally** – up his [Jan Koller's] backside."*
ANDY TOWNSEND, ITV
(Robin Harvie)

Pedantry Corner

Sir,

John Masefield wrote that when he was buried his life would be "reduced to lists of dates and facts". What a shame that 'Bookworm' can get neither date nor fact correct ("The Poetry Circus", Eye 1212).

Masefield was not knighted and was appointed Poet Laureate in 1930 (not 1935). He lasted for 37 (not 32) years in the role.

DR PHILIP W. ERRINGTON.

... Xavier Iles on Andrew Richards on 'roofs'... I must assume that Xavier is rather older than I am because the last time I went to the Colosseum it didn't have a roof... but surely the partial roof element which shelters the seated crowd at an arena/stadium would really be better referred to as a Canopy? I have been designing buildings for some long time now and have always understood a roof to be an element that fully covered and protected a building... but what do I know...

STEPHEN SHIRES.

... The author of the "Another re-entry" article (Literary Review, Eye 1211) I felt tried too hard to be witty at the expense of Star Trek fans resulting in a glaring faux-pas.

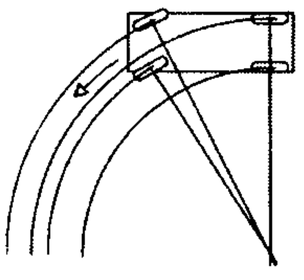
When discussing the eagerly awaited new Star Trek film he/she writes, "It's out in November, but chances are that if you have read this far, you already know that". Well I have read this far but as "any fule know" the film was due for release December 2008 but as of February this year it has been delayed until May 2009.

A correction perhaps? Make it so.

GARETH PROCTOR.

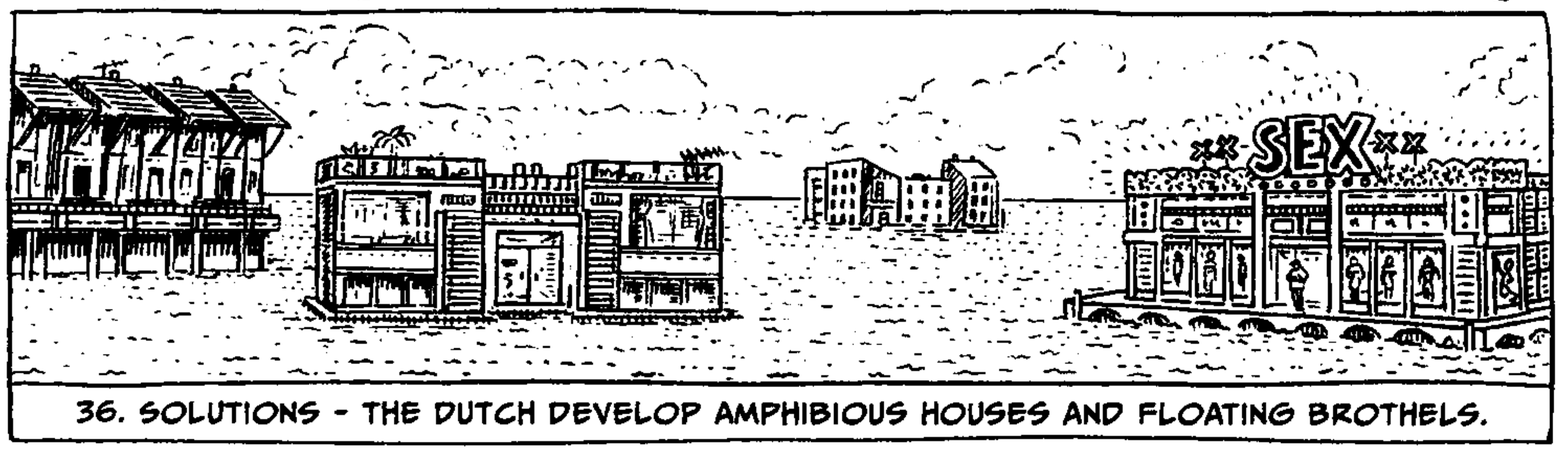
Does your correspondent Jonathan Swale (Pedantic Solution's issue 1212) drive? Has he ever tried to nose his car into a narrow parking space? What do they teach people at Cambridge? Simple physics dictates how the wheels of a fixed wheelbase vehicle behave in a turn, as the diagram indicates; the fixed rear axle, being fixed, must be at right angles to the arc of the turn; the Ackerman steering geometry of the steering front wheels turn the front wheels to position them at right angles to the centre of the turning circle. In consequence the front offside wheel, being furthest away from that centre, necessarily traces an arc of greater diameter than that of the nearside rear wheel, which is closest to that centre. Naturally the differential is increased as the wheelbase increases, as in a bus.

BOB COOKE.



PS: The attached diagram may be of interest to Cambridge graduates (they all use bicycles, don't they?)

● *This correspondence is now clozzzzzzed. Ed.*



Letter from **Beijing**

from Our Own Correspondent

IS not the full force of nature a wonder to behold? In this our Olympic year, things were beginning to look a bit sticky for our great leaders before the earth, quite literally, moved for us. From victims to survivors – and didn't you folks in the west lap it up?

When they first began, the demonstrations around the journey of the Olympic torch – a Nazi propaganda invention, if ever a warning had been required – were so amusing. All those British bobbies manhandling protesters to the ground, it's just what we always thought about the brutal and repressive west. Alas, it continued to Paris and beyond – not that we would know, because our leaders denied there was any disruption and there was the customary e-freeze on foreign media reports entering the country.

As rumours circulated about further problems, the government upped the ante, railing against the lies of the western media and releasing 14 documents which prove that "Tibet is an Inalienable Part of China." These included Ming Dynasty (1368-1644) edicts outlining Chinese claims to an "ulterior region of Tibet" and even an ode by the Dalai Lama calling Chairman Mao "a loving mother who protects us".

Presented with such irrefutable evidence and outraged by western lies, the people were none too pleased and there followed boycotts of French companies along with a few quickly hushed-up stories of westerners being hunted and beaten by mobs. The government even sent several vanloads of armed police to raid a rather seedy bar and favourite French expat haunt in Beijing's Foreigner District. Those not carrying passports were rounded up and taken for a night in the cells, Chinese-style: bound and gagged with plastic bags over their heads and beaten for any attempt to move or speak. Unfortunately one of the "foreign devils" was the French ambassador's son – *Vivent les relations diplomatiques!*

As embassies then caught on to what was happening, the government tried to distance itself from problems largely of its own making. There is no resentment, it chirped, while forcing foreign residents out of the country in their thousands and quietly sacking a magazine editor who called the reaction "blind nationalism". So much for Olympic openness. Then, with the Olympic Dream being contorted into some grotesque version of Middle Kingdom nationalism, glorious nature came to our rescue.

For the first five hours after the quake ripped through Sichuan, an ominous, distinctly Chinese silence – and then, with the Burmese offering the perfect model of how not to behave, the propaganda machine was unleashed. This was the consummation devoutly to be wished for – China as victim once more, the massive relief effort, the acceptance of foreign aid, three days of national mourning for ordinary people: a new, caring and open regime.

The same western media, so damning about Tibet, remained mute as the government arrested "dissidents" who criticised the authorities for not capitalising on the first "golden" 72-hours of rescue time. They all scurried to view Wen Jinbao's newly-established Facebook page, eulogising the new open regime and neglecting to mention that at the same time YouTube was being censored to ensure unsanctioned accounts of the relief effort would not slip out.

Admirable though much of the relief effort has been, all the blankets in the world cannot compensate for the fact that the government refused to respond to local geological warnings of increased seismic activity in recent months and accepted bribes to "overlook" cut corners in anti-quake measures for public buildings – one survey of damaged schools found only two out of 17 met anti-seismic regulations. A few low-ranking officials will take the rap for this, but with corruption still endemic, this will be scant consolation for grieving parents. Roll on the Olympics!

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

● "The Victimless Leather jacket was a central work in our 'Design and the Elastic Mind' exhibition," Paola Antonelli told reporters at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, "and we're all sad that it has died. It was a jacket made of living tissue, but it started growing, growing, growing, until it became too big for its own good. It was fed nutrients by tube, expanded too quickly and started to clog its own incubation system. The artists who made it were back in Australia, so after five weeks, I had to make the painful decision to kill the jacket by switching off its life support system."

Speaking from their research laboratory in Perth, artists Oron Catts and Ionat Zurr were undismayed by the death of their Victimless Leather exhibit. "It was only one of several works we created for MoMA, and the others are doing well" they observed. "We grew the leather jacket inside a bioreactor, using a biodegradable polymer coated with 3T3 mouse cells to form connective tissue, and topped with human bone cells to create a stronger layer of skin. Our latest project is to grow a nose, lips, and eyes, connected to a living mask that would imitate a face. That's a lot harder than growing a jacket."

Lamenting the jacket's death, Ms Antonelli added "I've always been pro-choice, and for days I could not make the decision. I was sleepless at night, wrestling with the moral dilemma of killing a coat. That thing was alive, and I killed it." *(The Art Newspaper, May 2008. Spotter: Katharine Scully)*

– ● –

● *"The reason I denied the allegations of chair sniffing on thirteen occasions is because I wanted to protect the woman involved," Liberal Party leader Troy Buswell tearfully told reporters in Mandurah, Western Australia. "These are difficult issues for me and my family to deal with, but it is now time to put the record straight. I admit sniffing the chair that a female colleague had just been sitting on in my Parliament House office in December 2005, and I also admit to snapping the bra strap of a Labor party staffer, and making sexist remarks to Liberal MP Katie Hodson-Thomas. However, these are not resigning matters, and I fully expect to lead my party into the next elections, and to become state premier in 2009."*

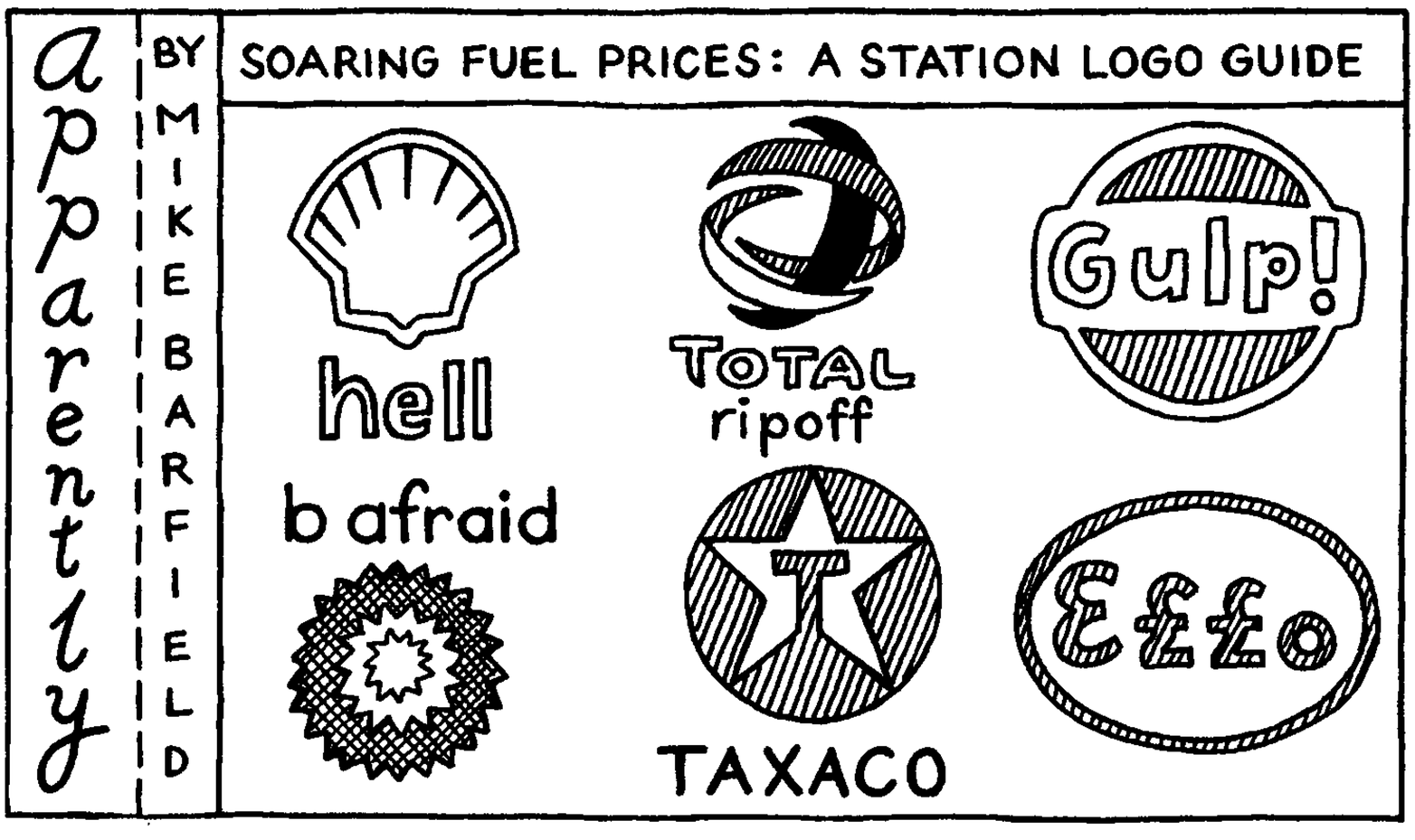
Buswell's colleague, Kim Hames, described him as "a man with a robust sense of humour. Troy is a quality person, and when you get to

know him, these incidents aren't what he's like. He's a rough diamond, and you don't fix a rough diamond by smashing it to pieces. " (The Age, 29/4/08. Spotter: Alun Long)

– ● –

● "I can't fully explain why I'm doing this," Jeff Deck told a press conference in Spokane, Washington, "but typos have always bugged me. Signs saying 'birthday candells' or 'sale start's tomorrow' infuriate me, so I set up the Typo Eradication Advancement League to combat grammatical errors, And now I've set out on a year-long journey across America, to make the US a safer place for spelling."

"We carry a supply of erasers, chalk, and white-out fluid," added his colleague Benjamin Herson, "and correct errors wherever we see them, in eighteen states so far. We have not yet encountered fisticuffs, although our efforts are not always appreciated, especially if we ask for a ladder so we can correct overhead signs. After I'd corrected a chalk sign in a Seattle market that said 'beefstake tomatoes,' the stallholder shouted abuse at me and changed the spelling back, and last night here in Spokane, we were thrown out of a bar for trying to correct a sign that read 'cake's.' And when I recently pointed out to a shopkeeper in California that the sign outside his premises said 'grocerry store,' he replied with just two words, one of which was 'mother.' Some people just have no feeling for language." *(Seattle Times, 23/4/08, and Chicago Tribune, 21/5/08. Spotter: Brendan Joseph O'Byrne)*



PRIME MINISTERIAL DECREE NO. 23

From the Desk of the Iron Leader

Comrades!

The following is the text of the speech given by the Supreme Leader Comrade Brown to the Institute for Social, Economic and Environmental Policy Development, on the theme of "Security and Liberty".

All Comrades are required to read this historic and seminal text within the next 42 days.

Comrades,

(Standing ovation)

Never before have we faced such grave perils which are threatening the foundations of everything that we believe in. The question which confronts us is how we are to preserve our security without sacrificing our ancient and hard-worn liberties.

The subversive, pseudo-libertarian clown Davis has claimed that the necessary measures I have taken to defend the lives of innocent citizens are in some way an assault on their freedoms.

He indulges in hysterical rhetoric about our new powers of detention, about CCTV cameras in every street, about compulsory ID cards, about the right of the police to conduct their enquiries by knocking on your door in the middle of the night and shooting you should the need arise.

I say to this self-appointed champion of anarcho-egotism, how ridiculous can you get?

No loyal party member has anything to fear from these measures – only the criminal elements who are bent on destabilising the lawful government of the British nation are rightly worried by the idea of 24-hour surveillance by the apparatus of a benign state.

That is why Mr Davis and his deluded rabble of supporters, such as Comrades Marshall-Andrews and Gibson, may well soon find themselves detained for 42 days of questioning by officers of the KGB (Keep Gordon Brown) and footage of themselves on the toilet being shown on our state television as proof of their thought crimes against the Supreme Leader.

(Standing ovation lasting for 42 days)

The Official Communiqué Issued After The State Visit Of President Bush, The Hated War Criminal, Imperialist Warmonger And Friend Of The Discredited Former Leader Ex-Comrade Blair

The Supreme Leader was honoured to receive a personal visit from the above-mentioned world leader, who was quick to pay tribute to everything the Supreme Leader had achieved, in particular his support for the war in Iraq, thus bravely continuing the noble stand for freedom made by the disgraced former leader Comrade Blair. In return for this unequivocal tribute to the policies of the Age of No Change, the Supreme Leader pledged that he would keep British troops in Afghanistan, if necessary, for 42 years.

The two leaders then exchanged their highest state honours. Comrade President Bush was awarded the Grand Order Of The Age Of Change (First Class). In return, he gave the Supreme Leader the prestigious KFC (a ceremonial mug inscribed with the insignia of the KFC over its famous motto "It's finger-lickin' good").

THE NEED FOR RESTRAINT

A Personal Message To All Workers From The Supreme Leader

More than ever today it is vital that every Comrade should act prudently in resisting the threat of inflation caused entirely by external forces of international capitalism and not at all caused by the wise and prudent financial leadership of the Supreme Spender (surely "Leader"?).

Members of the Politburo have therefore been instructed that, to set an example, they will this year be foregoing their statutory 12 percent salary increase, thus limiting their remuneration to a mere £166,000.

This may involve severe hardship, particularly to those commissars who have several houses to support.

In light of this moral lead, it is only right that all other state employees should make a similar sacrifice, particularly nurses, teachers, front-line soldiers, etc, whose rapacious demands for more money are threatening to plunge the country into a new Dark Age of Lawsonite-Lamontian inflation.

Any workers who breach these guidelines will be branded as enemies of the state and detained for 42 days without trial or pay.

Signed

Gordon Brown

The Supreme Borrower

Enemy of the People No. 94 David Davis

TEN THINGS EVERY COMRADE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THIS SUBVERSIVE

by **Comrade Andrew Burnham**, Commissar For Culture, Media, Football And Dirty Tricks (data provided by SMEARSH, the independent state think-tank)

1. Davis is enjoying steamy telephone love romps with foreign-born fellow subversive, gorgeous, pouting TV star Shammi Chapati.
2. Er...
3. No, he isn't actually, and I never meant to suggest he was.
4. Why is everyone getting so touchy, it was just a joke, part of the normal cut-and-thrust of politics. Hey, lighten up Shami and David, I thought you believed in 'Liberty'!
5. I now realise, after consulting with Comrade Harriet Harperson, Commissar for Gaffes, that I deeply regret any offence caused to the happily married Mr Davis and Mrs Chakrabati by my unfortunate earlier remarks and I am very sorry to have been caught out.

National Celebrations To Mark The First Anniversary of the Supreme Leader's Accession To Power

There will be no celebrations to mark this occasion, as we all have important work to do in building the Age of Change.

The Supreme Leader wishes to convey his appreciation of the fact that no one has at any point suggested any such celebrations, which would be a wasteful and irresponsible diversion of the Leader's unflagging energy.

Commissar Balls, Supreme Friend of the Supreme Leader

A Service Of Holy Civil Partnership

To Be Held In The Church Of St Bartholomew The Simpson

(Weddings, Funerals A Speciality)

The President *(The Rev Martin Dudley – for it is he)*: Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God to join these men together in not quite matrimony because we don't want to get into any trouble, do we?

All: Cheeky!

The President: We shall now sing the opening hymn 'It's Raining Amen' by The Weather Girls.

The Reading

(There will then be a reading from the Letter of St Peter The Tatchell to the Guardian newspaper)

"It is totally sickening to think that the Church of England is still persecuting half the population of this country by refusing to marry consenting gay men and women. Surely in the 21st century such stupid Dark Age superstitions should be thrown on the scrapheap of history along with the C of E itself and all other organised homophobic religions."

All: Thanks be to God.

The Ceremony

The President: If any of you know any cause or just impediment as to why this vicar should not be joined to this other vicar in holy civil partnership, you are to declare it.

The Bishop of London: I object most strongly and I sent you several emails telling you not to do it.

The President: Get lost, Beardie – this is my church and I'll do what I like in it.

All: Yeah, get lost, you relic of the Middle Ages.

The Breaking of the Church

The President: We apologise for that quite-uncalled-for interruption. Now let's get on with making history. Do you Reverend N (or M) take this other Reverend N (or M) to be your lawfully wedded... whoops, no I never said that, er... civil partnered partner to have and to hold in whatsoever way you wish until one of you finds a new friend?

The Blessing

All: Bless!

The End of the Communion

The President: You may now kiss the Church of England goodbye.

All: Byeeeeeee!

1

2

In Today's *Eye*

100 Top Lists
Find out which list of '100 People You've Never Heard Of' is the most boring list ever published this week.

The Collected Lyrics of Borissey
Free booklet including the classic song 'Boring'.
"I bought a Guardian the other day,
There's no news in it so I threw it away."

Free Wallchart, Britain's Endangered Paperclips
A 3m x 3m laminated sheet detailing all the indigenous paperclips at risk of extinction due to globalisation.

Free Trouserpress for Every Reader
Just present the coupon on page 94 of this issue at your local Argos and you will get a free Deluxe Corby 'Creasemaster' Trouserpress.

Next Week – Free DVDs. *The Worst Films of Michael Caine starting tomorrow with 'The Portugese Caper', 1975 with Oliver Reed.*

Mugabe Rocked By Miliband Attack

by Our Man In Zimbabwe **Harare Mount**

A SHOCKED President Mugabe reeled yesterday under the ferocious onslaught unleashed by British Foreign Secretary David Miliband.

"I am thinking of resigning," he said, "and may give up politics altogether after Mr Miliband's criticisms."

Mr Miliband had earlier described Mr Mugabe's behaviour as "unacceptable and really not on at all".

"If Mr Mugabe continues with this sort of nonsense, we will have no option but to do absolutely nothing."

Mr Miliband called on other nations to do nothing as well.

Following this attack, the 89-year-old Zimbabwean dictator was said to be visibly shaken.

"I was expecting sanctions or maybe an invasion but not a mild public rebuke from Mr Miliband.

"I shall have to rethink my entire approach to politics and will probably give up being an evil dictator in order to become a monk."

Bank Chiefs' Cautious Warning

THE GOVERNOR of the Bank of England, Mr Mervyn King, yesterday told the City, "We're all going to die! We're doomed. Do you hear me? Doomed."

City analysts interpreted Mr King's coded remarks as an indication that interest rates might *(cont. p. 94)*

Secret Documents Found On Train Shock

SENIOR politicians expressed dismay last night at the news that for the third time this year a train had actually been running – thus providing somewhere for senior civil servants to leave secret documents.

Said Data Minister Patsy Jacket MP: "It's an outrage and suggests a systemic failure across the whole railway network."

However, a spokesman for Railtrack called it "an isolated incident". He said: "We regret this uncharacteristic error and will do everything in our power to make sure it doesn't happen again." *(Reuters)*

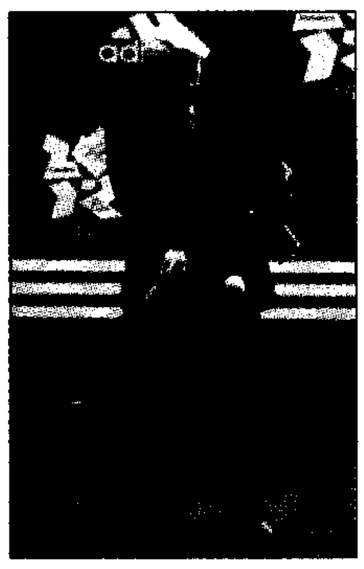
OIL CRISIS TALKS

WIMBLEDON 2008

SIX TO WATCH

1. **Boring Johnson** British hopeful from Henley-on-Thames. Fresh from his victory over ageing champion Red Kenski, Boring hopes to get through to the second round and defeat David Cameron. Come on Boring!

2. **Borisa Johnsonovic** Tousle-haired blonde bombshell from Belarus, Borisa is refusing to wear a skirt this year and is instead wearing cycle shorts. Phwoarr!



3. **Borodin Legova** The much fancied Ukrainian hopes to meet Maria Sharapova in the shower *(Surely "in the quarter-final"? Ed.)*. Crikey!

4. **Doris Johnson** British women's hopeful, the first transsexual player to compete under new EU equal opportunity ruling 1789/423b-2008. Blimey!

5. **Bjorgis Johanson** Top sweded-seed from the land of pickled herring, hopes to make his name on grass although he says he has never smoked it. Cripes!

6. **Boris Johnmacenroeson** The bad boy of the circuit whose gaffes get him into hot water. Ever the joker, he told reporters, "There's always plenty of spectators when I'm around – all unsold." *(That's enough Wimbledon.)*

"Nothing costs less than a pound any more"

GLENDA SLAGG

THE NUMBER-ONE SEEDY!?!

■ **NAOMI CAMPBELL – what a disgrace!?! One of the world's top models with millions in the bank and an icon for every little lass who wants to tread the catwalk!?! And what does she do?!? Blow her top – a mile high!!?! A-rantin' and a-ravin', a-hittin' and a-spittin' just because some poor luggage handler lost her fancy suitcase!?! We all lose our bags, darlin', but we don't lose our tempers!?! And what does the half-baked beak dish out as her punishment?!? Community service, for Gawd's sake!?! Take it from me, dearie – we don't *want* you in the community!?! We want you behind bars!!?! Like any other terrorist!?!!**

■ SPARE A THOUGHT for troubled Naomi – the black beauty who is an icon for every little lass who ever wanted to tread *(You've done this bit. Ed)*. So Naomi blew her top when some BA berk mislaid her luggage in Terminal Five!?!! I don't blame her. Haven't we all lost our tempers at Heathrow and fancied giving someone a thump!?! I know I have! But Naomi had the guts to go ahead and do it and spit in the face of the bungling jobsworth!!?! Community service?!? They should have given her a medal!?!!

■ HERE THEY ARE – Glenda's Midsummer Munchkins!?!

● **Cy Twombly.** American painter and master of the dribble and the squiggle!?! How about a Tate à Tate *chez moi*?!?

● **Gerald Scarfe CBE.** Britain's sexiest cartoonist, who makes us laugh on Sunday morning!?! Arise Sir Gerald – you will round my place!?!

● **Andy Murray!?!!** He's the new Tim Henman!?!! Mmmm!?? New balls, please!?!!

Byeee!!

Han-z-z-zard

Prime Minister's Question Time

Mr Gordon Brown *(Dunleadin, Lab)*: May I, on behalf of all Members, pay tribute to the large numbers of our gallant forces who have made the supreme sacrifice in Afghanistan since I announced the large numbers yesterday?

All: Hear! Hear! Hear!

Mr Gordon Brown: And may I state unequivocably that they all died for a noble cause?

All: Hear! Hear! Hear!

Mr David Cameron *(Bullingdon, Con)*: May I wholeheartedly join the Prime Minister in paying tribute as well to our heroes who, as he says, are fighting in a noble cause?

All: Hear! Hear! Hear!

Mr Nick Cleggover *(Beds, Lib-Dem)*: May I also wholeheartedly join the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition in also paying tribute to our heroes who, as they both pointed out before me, are fighting in a noble cause?

Voice from Back Benches: Er... what cause is that?

(Uproar in House. Cries of "Shame!", "Affront to democracy!", "String him up!")

Mr Speaker: I must warn the Honourable Member that such a flagrant breach of parliamentary protocol – i.e. trying to have a debate about a current issue – may result in the Member's expulsion from the House.

All: Hear! Hear! Hear!

(Members cheer and wave expenses claims before voting themselves additional allowances)

SINGLETON'S SHOCK REVELATIONS

Letters to the Editor

The Resignation of the Rt Hon David Davis MP

SIR – Whatever the denizens of the Westminster village may say, out here in the real world there is massive support for Mr David Davis in his brave and principled stand over the so-called 42-days issue. The threat posed to our way of life by Mr Al Q'aeda and his terrorist cronies is a very real one and Mr Davis should be congratulated for insisting that they should all be locked up for a minimum of 42 days.

Maj-Gen Sir Farquharson-Gussett,
The Old Post Office,
Market Barkworth, Dorset.

SIR – I have never before had any truck with party politics, but Mr Davis's brave and principled stand will have struck a chord in the hearts of millions of loyal English men and women who are fed up with being told what kind of salad vegetables, whether bendy or no, that they can buy in their shops by the faceless bureaucrats of Brussels. At last someone has had the courage to stand up and call for a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty. Hats off to Mr Davis.

Mrs Q. Cumber,
The Old Greenhouse, Rowan-Under-Pelling, Staffs.

SIR – Am I alone in congratulating Mr David Davis on taking his brave and principled stand on whatever it is he is taking his brave and principled stand about? There are far too few politicians in this day and age who are willing to take a brave and principled stand about anything, and we should give him our unstinting support for being prepared to take a brave and principled stand on a matter of grave national concern, whatever that might be.

The Very Rev. Matilda Vaughan-Roxby,
The Old Vicarage,
Yoghurt St Ivel, Cornwall.

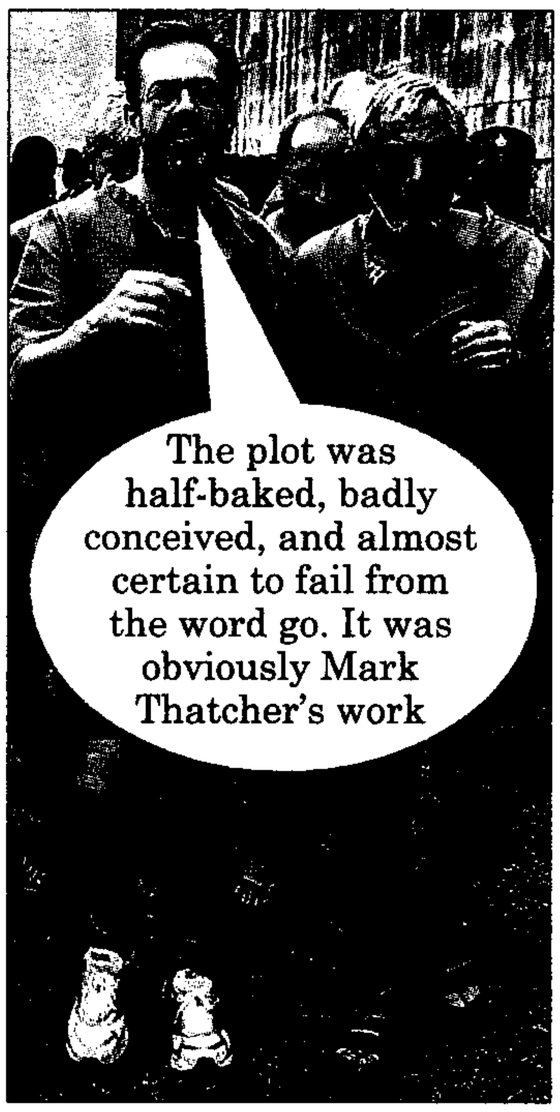
SIR – May I be the first to support the brave and principled stand made by Mr David Davis in defence of the unorthodox strokeplay of Sir Kevin Pietersen in the recent 42-over game against New Zealand? There is nothing new in the so-called "reverse switch". This stroke was first introduced by the legendary Indian batsman the Maharajah of Satnav, who employed it to great effect in his dazzling innings of 994 not out against the Viceroy's XI at Pisspore in 1872.

To lover of the game the stroke was always thereafter known as "Darkie's Swipe", in honour of the Prince.

Its resurrection by Mr Pietersen should be as welcome to lovers of freedom everywhere as Mr Davis's long-overdue call or the locking up of terrorist suspects for an indefinite period.

Sir Herbert Gussett,
The Old Hedgehog Farm,
Stannah St Airlift, Wilts.

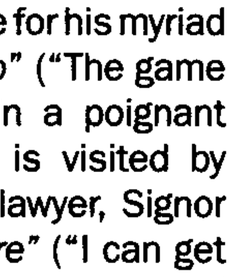
EQUATORIAL GUINEA TRIAL



Opera On Three

Live from La Scala

Vivio Silvio



Berlusconi's much acclaimed sequel to his earlier masterpiece, *The Robbie Baron*.

As the curtain rises, a chorus of magistrates, prosecutors and police chiefs exult at the forthcoming trial of Silvio, the popular robber baron who has returned from his years in exile. "*Tutti Frutti*" they sing ("We gotta you thissa time, boss"), to the approval of the watching peasantry.

Everything looks black for Silvio, who imagines that he is finally to face justice for his myriad crimes. "*Sono finito*" ("The game is up") he sings in a poignant aria. But then he is visited by his clever English lawyer, Signor Davide Mills. "*Volare*" ("I can get you off") sings the husband of Tessa Jowell.

The opera concludes with the baron appearing before the Italian people (on his own television channel) to inform them that he has just issued a new law, declaring that all court cases involving himself are now null and void. "*Nulla e voida*" he sings, to the amazement of the assembled magistrates, prosecutors etc. With one bound he is free, and the robber baron lives to steal another day.

JANAWAY.—On Wednesday 14th May 2008, to Sophie (née Billington) and Chris, a daughter, Philippa Imogen Frances, a brother for Tristan.

Daily Telegraph

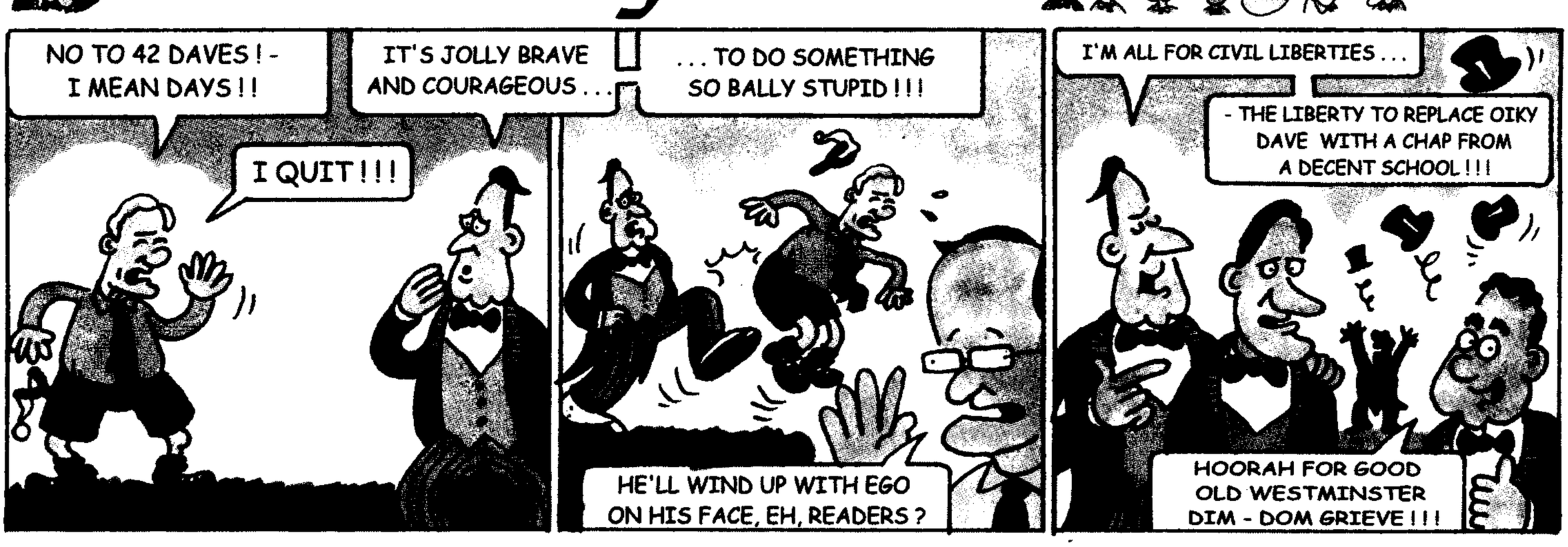
Our Parliamentary Candidate, Peter Dixon (right), believes that national issues, such as low employment, economic stability and strong public services are important.

Chelmsford Labour Party

Thursday June 19th Churston & Galmpton Ladies Group,
7.00 Eucharist Barn Chapel
7.30pm "Ugandan Experience (with slides)" Barn Hall

Parish Magazine

Dave Snooty AND HIS PALS


NO TO 42 DAVES! - I MEAN DAYS!!
IT'S JOLLY BRAVE AND COURAGEOUS . . .
I QUIT!!!
. . . TO DO SOMETHING SO BALLY STUPID!!!
HE'LL WIND UP WITH EGO ON HIS FACE, EH, READERS?
I'M ALL FOR CIVIL LIBERTIES . . .
- THE LIBERTY TO REPLACE OIKY DAVE WITH A CHAP FROM A DECENT SCHOOL!!!
HOORAH FOR GOOD OLD WESTMINSTER DIM - DOM GRIEVE!!!

METROPOLITAN POLICE NOTICE

THIEVES GET AWAY WITH £130,000

Have you seen this couple who are believed to be Conservative MPs?

They are not wanted by anyone in connection with daylight robbery committed in the House of Commons. They were last seen pretending that they had no idea that using taxpayers' money to pay rent on a London flat which they already owned and then funnelling it through a family trust to avoid inheritance tax was in some way wrong.

PLEASE HELP

"Here comes daddy now! Give 'im a wave!"

DARLING LISTS 'WORST CONDITIONS FOR ECONOMY SINCE 1997'

1. Gordon Brown is Prime Minister
2. Alistair Darling is Chancellor of Exchequer
3. Rest of Cabinet is equally competent
4. Er...
5. That's it.

MODERN INN SIGNS

EXCLUSIVE TO ALL NEWSPAPERS

WILL THERE BE A RECESSION?

YES says the eminent **Professor Richard Panic** from the Institute for Fiscal Studies. Here's his reason why:

Once you strip out the seasonally adjusted inflation figures from the current macro-economic model, over both a short and medium term, factoring into account the recent surge in oil prices balanced against a basket of other commodities as traded on the futures markets, one has to come to the conclusion that yes, there certainly will be a recession.

NO says the eminent **Professor Richard Calm** from the Institute of Studying Fiscals. Here's his reason why:

Once you strip out the seasonally adjusted inflation figures from the current macro-economic model, over both a short and medium term, factoring into account the recent surge in oil prices balanced against a basket of other commodities as traded on the futures markets, one has to come to the conclusion that yes, there certainly will not be a recession.

VERDICT: Blame Gordon Brown. Watch our Michael Caine DVD.

From The Message Boards

Members of the online community respond to the major issues of the day...

War Criminal Spotted At Euro 2008

i ws disgusset-ed 2 see the old natzi from cro-asia supportin his team. He live's in austria n they make him welcom, a bit different from the hostilety us english get from the austrien's! and we saved them from the natzi's!!! ● if i met the austrien's i wud tell them IF IT WAS'NT FOR US YOUD ALL BE SPEAKIN GERMAN TO-DAY– ***Boys_of_66***

Forces allow uniforms on Pride march

As a former military man I adopt the traditional credo of the British Army: live and let live. I don't care if a chap is black, white, green, or (as in this case) pink, as long as he doesn't ram it down my throat. If a soldier wishes to wear his uniform on a "gay pride" march, then good luck to him. Indeed, a well turned-out "regiment" of athletic young men would be a wonderful advertisement for the Army (as the Guards have demonstrated down the years).
My reservations concern the "march" itself, which involves precious little marching and a great deal of lewd exhibitionism. Perhaps the forces themselves could provide a more appropriate platform for the gays' distinctive brand of soldiering. The Royal Tournament would have been ideal, but that fell victim to the PC Brigade (not yet an actual Army unit!). So why not incorporate some sort of gay display into the Trooping the Colour? The Household Cavalry, with their colourful tradition, would surely rise to the occasion. – ***Robert "R"***

My elderly dog Rupert (not his real name) was brought up to respect all uniforms, especially those of the British Army. He is, however, rather stuck in his ways, and has never really come to terms with the gay lib community.
This is a problem because we live on the Gay Pride route and I fear Rupert might react badly to the sight of soldiers rubbing shoulders (or worse) with the more flamboyant gays. God forbid anything should happen: I would never be able to look him – or myself – in the eye again. – ***Gerald***

As an officer who has experienced active service with gay colleagues, I can confirm that current Army policy is to adopt a relaxed position when it comes to homosexual activity.
– ***Officer_and_Gentleman***

Half of all Scottish murderers are drunk

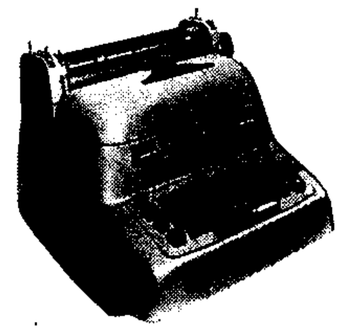
miss's the point – half of them may-be drunk half of them may-be sober but ALL OF THEM ARE SCOTTISH. lol! ☺ "do the math" – ***England_till_I_die***

"What's your problem?"

Advertisement

SSC Spelman Secretarial College

Are you stuck in a dead-end job like nannying, wasting your life looking after other people's screaming kids?



Well, did you know that you can re-train as a highly paid secretary by spending as little as twenty minutes a week at the Spelman Secretarial College?

At the Spelman Secretarial College you'll be fully trained in all aspects of being a secretary, from changing nappies to driving the kids to school, from making children's tea to answering the phone and telling William Hague to ring back later.

"Earn More from the Nanny State!" SSC

JUDGE FREES TOP TERRORIST 'BUT HE MUST STAY IN PRISON'

by Our Courtroom Staff **Joshua Rosenbeard**

A MAN described as "the most dangerous terrorist in Britain" was today allowed to walk free, provided he stays at home under a 24-hour guard by 500 armed policemen.

Mr Al Bastardi must comply with the following conditions laid down by Mr Justice Looney:

1. He must not make any telephone calls to his best friend Osama bin Laden.
2. He is strictly forbidden from receiving any visitors, particularly Mr bin Laden.
3. When he visits the toilet, he must not attempt to contact Mr bin Laden by shouting messages down the pan.
4. He is permitted to watch television, but must switch it off if Mr bin Laden is shown, in case he is trying to send coded signals to his former top lieutenant.
5. He is permitted to have one copy of the Daily Telegraph delivered to his door each day,

Mr Al Bastardi

(We are not allowed to show his picture under the new privacy laws)

but only after specially-trained police experts have scanned it for any mentions of Mr bin Laden which must then be cut out of the paper before Mr Bastardi is allowed to read it.

6. A special satnav device is to be implanted in his beard to allow the security services to keep track of all his movements, particularly if he is attempting to keep a secret rendezvous with Mr bin Laden in the local Balti curry house, the Star of Basra.
7. However, he is of course allowed to publish inflammatory material on the internet, urging his followers to rise up and wage war on all non-believers.

MAN SAW DANDO SUSPECT 'GETTING ON BUS'

by Our Courtroom Staff **Desperate Dan Do**

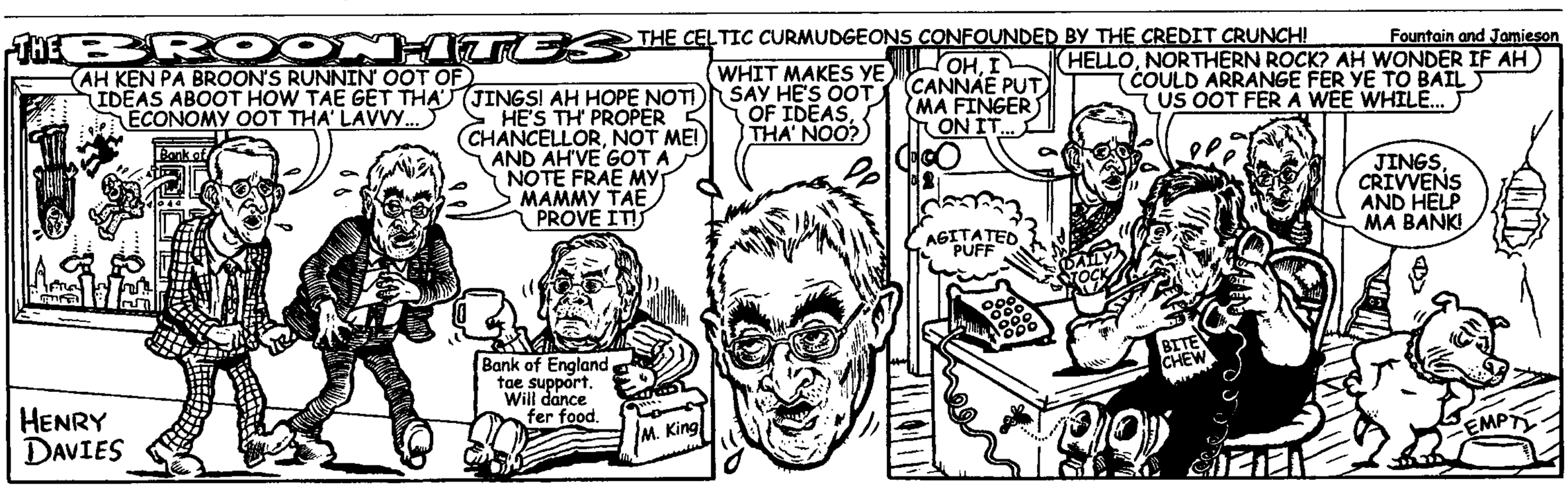
A WITNESS, whose name cannot be revealed because we can't remember what it is, told the Appeal Court today how he saw "a man who looked very much like Boy George" getting onto a 73 bus only two and a half miles from the Fulham home of TV presenter Jill Dando.

"He was acting suspiciously," the witness told the court. "He looked very much like the sort of man who might have been carrying a gun."

Earlier the court had heard evidence from Inspector "Knacker of the Yard" Knacker, who said that the accused man, Mr George, had a television set in his flat and would almost certainly have seen Miss Dando on the screen on a number of occasions.

"He could well have become obsessed by her," the Inspector said, "which, given that he was a weirdo and a loner, could easily have led to him going out to buy a gun and then shooting her."

When Mr Justice Cocklecarrot asked whether there was any evidence to link the accused to the crime, the Inspector said, "There is no evidence as such, but in my experience, you know, you don't need evidence in a case like this when it is quite obvious who did it."


THE BROONITES
THE CELTIC CURMUDGEONS CONFOUNDED BY THE CREDIT CRUNCH!
Fountain and Jamieson
AH KEN PA BROON'S RUNNIN' OOT OF IDEAS ABOOT HOW TAE GET THA' ECONOMY OOT THA' LAVVY...
JINGS! AH HOPE NOT! HE'S TH' PROPER CHANCELLOR, NOT ME! AND AH'VE GOT A NOTE FRAE MY MAMMY TAE PROVE IT!
Bank of England tae support. Will dance fer food.
M. King
HENRY DAVIES
WHIT MAKES YE SAY HE'S OOT OF IDEAS, THA' NOO?
OH, I CANNAE PUT MA FINGER ON IT...
HELLO, NORTHERN ROCK? AH WONDER IF AH COULD ARRANGE FER YE TO BAIL US OOT FER A WEE WHILE...
AGITATED PUFF
DAILY JOCK
BITE CHEW
JINGS, CRIVVENS AND HELP MA BANK!
EMPTY

THE VOICE OF CONTROVERSY

WHY I HATE SLUGS

Simon Heffer

THIS June the gardens of England are awash with a deadly plague of slugs, eating everything that lies in their path.

No vegetable is safe from this slithering menace, which is spreading a trail of devastation across our green and pleasant land.

And who does the slug remind me of, with its slippery ways, its slimy touch and its patronising Old Etonian accent?

Yes, it's David Cameron, the slithy leader of the Conservative Party, oozing his way slowly but surely along the corridors of power towards the top job.

Let's put down some poisonous pellets before it's too late, and watch him die in agony!

POETRY CORNER

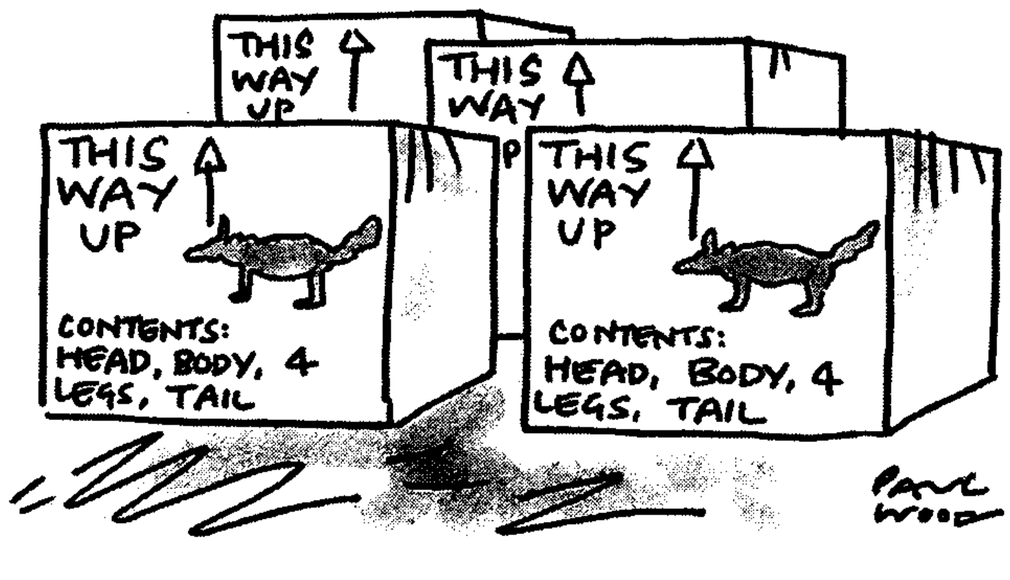
Lines on the 67th Birthday of TV Cook Delia Smith

So. Happy Birthday
Delia Smith.
You are 67.

I suppose you will be going
Down to Tesco
To buy yourself
A cake.

E.J. Thribb (17½)

Flat Pack of Wolves



LABOUR UNVEILS PLANS FOR 750 ECO-TOWNS

by Our Environmental Staff **Patty O'Heater**

THE WHOLE of southern England is to be turned into a series of interlocking "eco-towns", each housing 700,000 people living in a totally "green", carbon-free environment.

At a press conference yesterday at the Department of Infrastructure, Urban Living and the Quality of Life (DIULAQL) the minister Patsy Jacket explained to waiting newsmen how the eco-city of tomorrow will work:

Homes

Each home will be fitted with:

- **underfloor solar heating**
- **lighting powered by recycled compost**
- **windmill-powered trouser presses in every bedroom.**

Transport

Cars will be banned and residents will travel everywhere by one of the following options:

- **sail-powered waterbuses using a canal system**
- **hop-on, hop-off hot air balloons**
- **Star Trek-style "transporter rooms"** *(not invented yet)*

Services

To minimise carbon footprint, energy-intensive schools and hospitals will be decentralised to neighbouring towns.

Huge Brazilian-style rainforests will be planted in every garden to soak up unwanted carbon and provide natural habitat for endangered species such as the chaffinch, the white rhino, the Van Diemen's Land Seahorse and the Giant Burmese Tree Frog.

Energy

To be supplied by coal-fired nuclear power plants (when available).

ONLINE MAP REVEALS UK CRIME HOTSPOTS*

*Crime hotspots in red

A Psychiatrist Writes

Dr Raj Persaud

AS A psychiatrist, I often ask myself, "Doctor, I seem to have this compulsion to copy out other people's work and pass it off as my own. Is there anything I can do about it?"

What I tell myself is that I am suffering from the condition which we psychiatrists called *Cuttus pastus plagiarensis* (or Ripov's Syndrome, as it is sometimes known).

What happens is that the patient cannot be bothered to carry out his own research, so he downloads it from other work and sells it to publishers as original work.

This can eventually lead to unfortunate side-effects, such as getting caught out and found guilty.

Unfortunately medical science has not yet been able to find any cure for this chronic problem, and the best thing is simply to carry on as normal and to blame it all on careless sub-editors and others who are in no position to contradict you.

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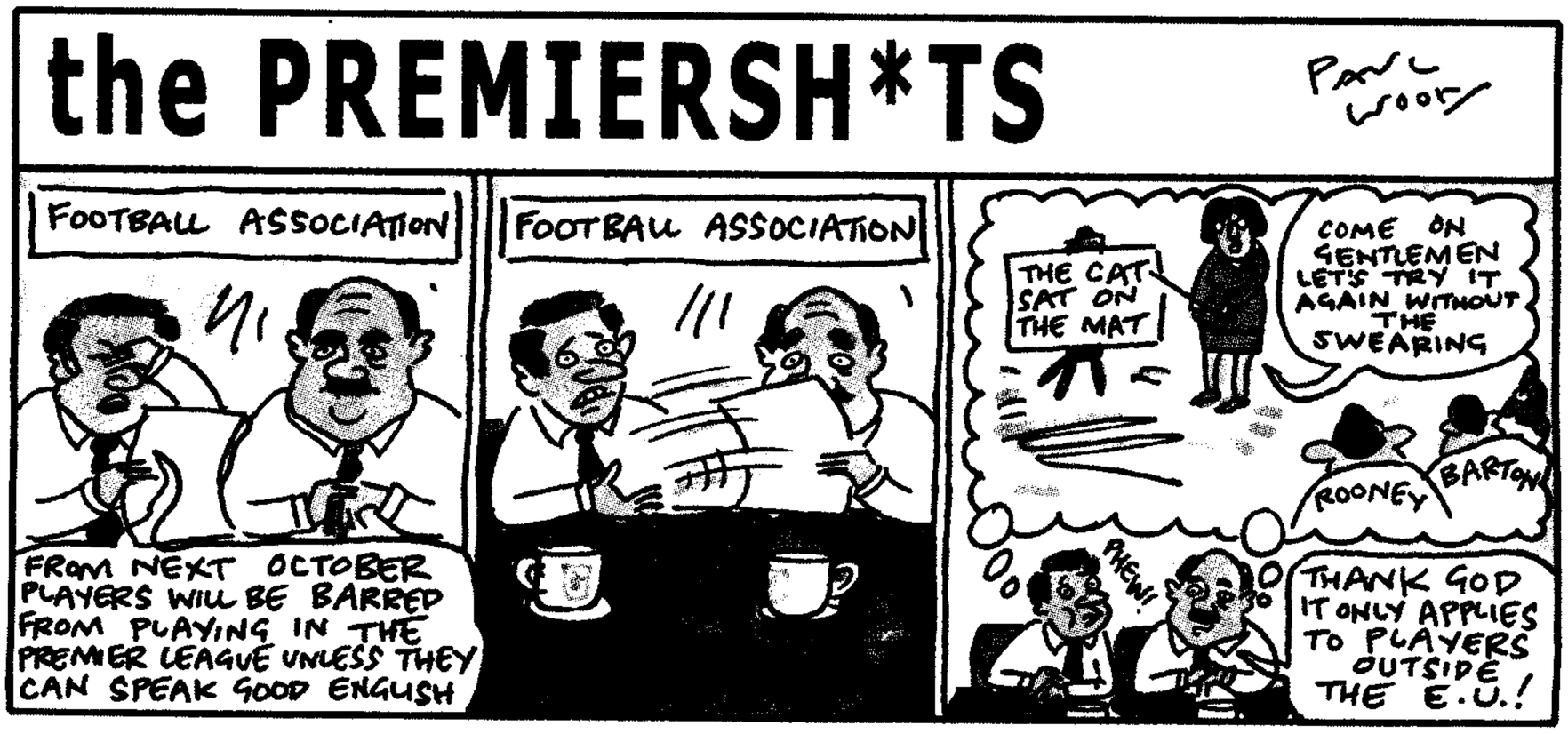
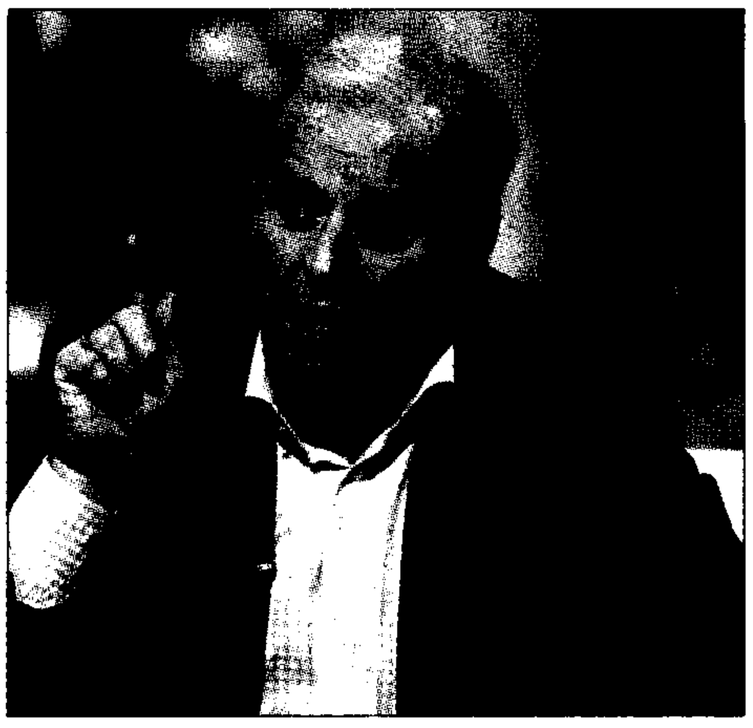
the PREMIERSH*TS


FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION
FROM NEXT OCTOBER PLAYERS WILL BE BARRED FROM PLAYING IN THE PREMIER LEAGUE UNLESS THEY CAN SPEAK GOOD ENGLISH
FOOTBALL ASSOCIATION
THE CAT SAT ON THE MAT
COME ON GENTLEMEN LET'S TRY IT AGAIN WITHOUT THE SWEARING
ROONEY
BARTON
PHEW!
THANK GOD IT ONLY APPLIES TO PLAYERS OUTSIDE THE E.U.!
PAUL WOOD

DIARY



KELVIN MACKENZIE

David Davis?

The guy's taking a bloody liberty.

And I don't mean a civil liberty.

Don't talk to me about civil liberties.

There's nothing civil about the liberties him and his towel-head chums take.

Let me tell you something.

Walking home last night, I was attacked with a machete by one of our swarthy friends.

Him and his thieving dusky pals made me pull down my trousers. And bend over.

And then they had their wicked way with me.

And no, since you ask: it wasn't pleasant.

How did it leave me feeling? In a word: Soiled. Dirtied. Humiliated.

Don't get me wrong.

I'm not saying it happened exactly like that. I might not have been attacked by anyone.

Blimey, I don't have a photographic memory.

Who do you think I am? TV's Derren Brown?

But if the incident had happened at all, then believe me, it would have happened EXACTLY LIKE THAT.

Bringing shame to the entire Muslim, Black and Gypsy communities.

Followed by not so much as a word of apology.

And what's David Davis going to do about it?

In a word: nothing whatsoever. Not a dicky bird.

Except invite those bloody bum-bashing Islamo-rapists to join him and his toffee-nosed pals from the silver-spoon-in-mouth community to a snooty cocktail party on his luxury estate.

And you know what I call that? Right first time.

I call it taking a bloody liberty.

Talk about a five-star bottler.

Who am I talking about? Right first time.

Mr David "Bottle-Face" Davis. Talk about cowards!

The bloke takes the easy way out and puts himself up for re-election on the nancy-boy "civil liberties" ticket.

Then I threaten to stand against him. My manifesto doesn't take long to print. It consists of just four words. Count 'em if you like:

1) THROW
2) AWAY
3) THE
4) KEY.

Then what happens? Right first time.

I throw caution to the winds. I want to show the world I'm not going to be bossed around by anyone.

So I take the brave, bold decision not to stand.

And what of Bottler Davis?

He doesn't even have the guts to change his mind.

Instead, in a disgusting show of yellow-faced, lily-livered cowardice, he bottles it and takes the coward's way out: he carries on standing. With his nose firmly in the air.

What I want to know is this.

Does he take *Sun* readers for fools?

Don't talk to me about Stephen Hawking. The guy's an obvious fraud and no mistake.

You know who he reminds me of? That bloke in the wheelchair on *Little Britain*. He plays the part of the cripple to perfection. But the moment your back's turned, I bet he's out of that wheelchair like a whippet and down his local boozer.

And here's another thing. Where did he learnt to talk like that?

Fair's fair. No-one likes to sink a decent English pint of Best more than me. But let me ask you this. Why should Hawking be allowed to get boozed-up every night on his so-called Disability Allowance?

Or, to translate that into plain English, why should we let him get out of his head every night on the proceeds of your hard-earned money and mine?

It makes me sick.

And now we're told that, pissed out of his head on taxpayers' money, Hawking's come up with This Theory.

Apparently, he thinks the whole world – your house, my house, your new Sound System, that new kitchen unit your missus has been badgering you for these past few months – all sprang up out of a "Black Hole" somewhere on the far side of the universe.

He must be joking.

Don't get me wrong. After they've downed a few, many of my best mates down this local hostelry can't help coming up with This Theory or That.

But then they go and do the decent thing. They sick it all up and the next day we forget all about it.

But not this bloke Hawking. He never stops banging on about his Black Holes.

Black are they? Funny that.

Something tells me his pockets would not be quite so stuffed with government hand-outs if the Holes in question were White.

Personally, I've had him and his pet theories up to here.

The guy's spitting in the face of common sense.

Hawking by name.

Hawking by nature.

I thought I'd heard it all. Silly me.

I clean forgot about our old friend Nelson Mandela.

Yes, folks, he's up to his old tricks again.

Hogging the limelight. Brown-nosing his celebrity pals. Acting the goody-goody. And getting ready to rake in yet more prezzies for his 90th birthday celebrations.

Give me strength!

How many more pricey gifts can one man pocket?

The guy's a one man argument for MORE CCTVs, LONGER detention and A LOT LESS civil so-called liberties.

I'm not saying Mandela's a thieving gypsy paedo toffee-nosed Old Etonian light-fingered ex-con with a lah-di-dah voice and an offensive weapon. But let's put it this way.

I wouldn't want to bump into him in a dark alley if he was fully-armed and out of his head on drugs at one o clock in the morning.

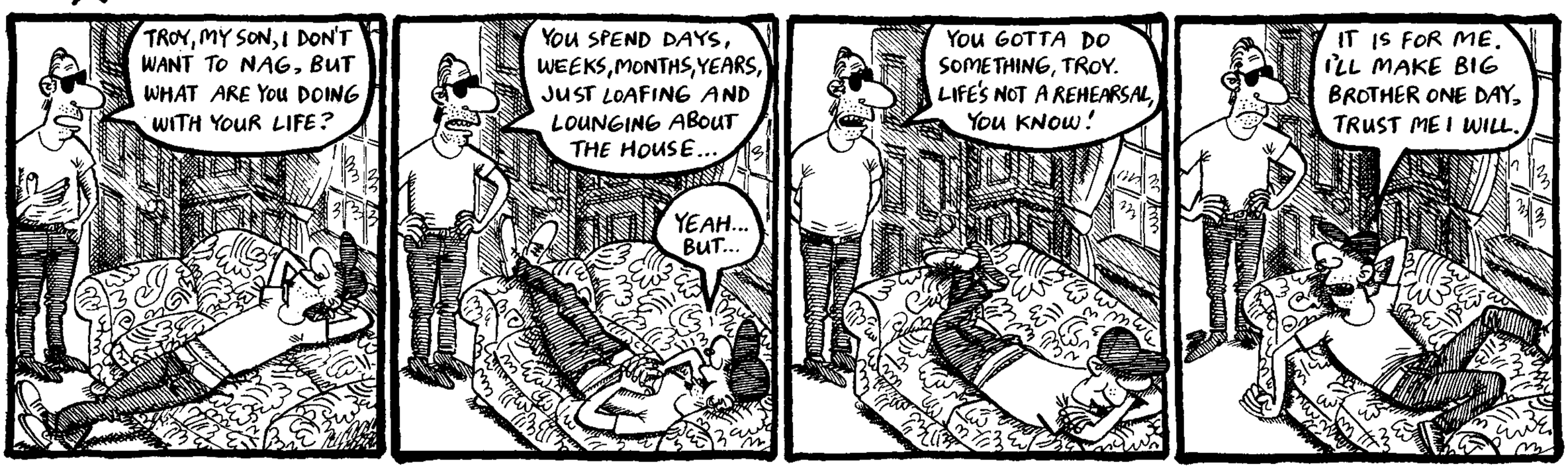
Agreed, he's proved himself highly accomplished at playing the "I'm-just-a-smiley-old-geezer-in-a-limp-wristed-flowery-shirt" card.

But sorry, mate. I've got your number. If you're expecting to claw a birthday present off me then you've got another think coming.

So do the hard-pressed British tax-payer a favour, Mandela.

And skip off back to where you come from.

As told to
CRAIG BROWN


TROY, MY SON, I DON'T WANT TO NAG, BUT WHAT ARE YOU DOING WITH YOUR LIFE?
YOU SPEND DAYS, WEEKS, MONTHS, YEARS, JUST LOAFING AND LOUNGING ABOUT THE HOUSE...
YEAH... BUT...
YOU GOTTA DO SOMETHING, TROY. LIFE'S NOT A REHEARSAL, YOU KNOW!
IT IS FOR ME. I'LL MAKE BIG BROTHER ONE DAY, TRUST ME I WILL.

Literary Review

Boy bland

Westlife: Our Story
(HarperCollins, £18.99)

THERE are no jobs for life any more, unless you're a pop star. Once upon a time the long-term career prospects for members of boy bands compared favourably only with those of the mayfly and certain small rodents. Barely had the poor little fellows seen any money, let alone spent it on drugs and private jets, than they were washed up and forgotten and considering new job opportunities at B&Q.

And yet here we have Westlife, the Irish Take That (except duller), celebrating ten years of nonstop chart-bothering. Since 1998 they have enjoyed 14 UK number one singles and seven UK number one albums and have sold 40 million albums around the world. Now, just to rub it in, someone has written their memoirs for them.

In these pages, the cheeky one, the not-so-cheeky one, the gay one and the other one promise to reveal the secrets of their inexorable rise and their astonishing survival. You may not know their names, recognise their faces or be able to name any of their songs, but you have to marvel at their tenacity.

So who are they? Shane is a Cancer and the youngest of seven. His parents were very supportive. "We weren't rich, don't be getting me wrong, but if we needed something, they managed to get the money together to buy it." School was "great". "In class, I was an OK student... My attention drifted very easily. There wasn't really any subject I loved... I enjoyed the craic with the lads."

Kian is the naughty one. "If you'd been at school with me, you may well have thought I was a cocky little shit." Help! Swearing! Fortunately there's a warning on the back cover: "This book contains strong language and may not be suitable for children."

Kian was constantly getting beaten up as a teenager. "I am being brutally honest with you when I say that I did sometimes turn on those who were smaller than me. I never hit anyone, but I did call people names."

Next it's Mark. "It was a rural upbringing and I loved every minute of it." By now it's clear that anyone looking for dirt should look elsewhere. Kian has sex with dolphins? Mark snorts baking powder by the kilo? Ah, if only they did. Years ago, Boy George said he preferred a nice cup of tea to sex, but you sense that these boys really do. Milk, no sugar, please. Chocolate finger? No, I really shouldn't.

They go through the pop star motions, though, staring moodily out of photographs wearing dinner jackets with bow ties rebelliously untied. Is anyone truly this boring? Very probably; but few public figures consciously set out to be dreary, and none has maintained such elevated levels of dullness for so long.

Mark's granny's house "was brilliant. My dad's mum is just the most loving woman in the world." All the boys love singing. Shane remembers Mark at school. "He more or less had a black person's soul voice, like. He stood out like a sore thumb." Mark, it would later emerge, is as gay as a goose, and you get the distinct impression that the teenage Mark would like to have had Shane's babies. But Shane had already met his future wife. Instead, united by a love of hair gel, they start a boy band.

Louis Walsh, the rapacious manager of Boyzone, becomes involved and starts sacking people. The one who can't sing has to go, as does the one who looks like a brickie. The survivors express their sorrow that their old friends haven't really spoken to them since, but they appreciate Walsh's firm hand.

At heart these are obedient, conservative, not terribly bright, incredibly conventional young men without any distinguishing features. Their first single goes to number one. "A dream come true. It was a fairy tale. I don't want to sound clichéd, but it literally was the stuff dreams are made of."

The boys dedicate this feeble book to their manager and their parents, but they love and respect and admire everyone else as well. "Meeting the Pope was a huge thing for me," says Mark. "It was like meeting Jesus's right-hand man." And Shane is thrilled to meet his hero, Tiger Woods: "Kind of the Pope of golf, like."

WHAT YOU DIDN'T MISS, Pt 94

Grub Street Irregular: Scenes from literary life
Jeremy Lewis
(Harper Press, £20)

I was a hopeless child: dim, backward, craven, retiring, self-conscious, devoid of all artistic or literary talent, incontinent, tone-deaf, speechless and inept. Not much has changed. From an early age I knew that finding paid employment would be tricky in the light of these disabilities. But if St Cake's, where I spent my formative years, prepares you for one thing it's finding the job for which you are suited, and so I ended up in publishing.

✣

Sitting one day in my office at Overprint and Remainder, while recovering from the statutory five-hour lunch – these were more expansive days before the accountants and their wretched economies prevailed – I looked up to find the figure of Lt Colonel "Bunty" Deepleigh-D'Ulle advancing upon me. Dressed in a dark herringbone overcoat, heather-mixture cavalry twill trousers, a lovat tweed sports jacket with a somewhat loud orange overcheck, spats, grey Oxfords and a knotted foulard scarf in a shade somewhere between cerulean and cornflower blue whose colour contrasted oddly with the iris of his glass eye... [*continues for several paragraphs*] he was carrying a copy of his travel book *The Little I Saw of Cuba*, which I had always greatly admired.

This was the beginning of a long and cordial friendship, although, nervous and tongue-tied as I was, I could never think of anything to say to him, while he, as befitted a man who had once cut off a Yugoslav partisan's head with a tin-opener, usually preferred to communicate by carrier pigeon. For some reason his *With Rod and Gun Through Roxburghshire* sold only eleven copies, six them to the author himself at discount, but I was immensely proud to have published it.

✣

Another friend from this time was Barbara Baugh, widow of the celebrated critic Hugh Carnapathy Hee, whose autobiography *Some Chaps I Knew* I remembered liking at prep school. Not that our relationship wasn't without its ups and downs. Barbara, who had also been married to Lord Crasher and Desmond Entirely-Forgotten, whose memoirs *Droop, Dahlias!* and *In My Window Box* I had greatly admired, had a volatile temperament. "Jeremy" she would say, "you're fucking useless. Why do you always bring Moet when you know I only drink Bollinger? And what's the point of having deferential unpaid help when its fucking car won't start?" What a grand girl she was and how I appreciated her subtle sense of humour. The red mark on my forehead, legacy of the time she hurled an ashtray previously owned by her seventh husband the French poet Jean-Marie Ennui, author of *Les Mouers Atroces*, which I greatly admired, is perhaps the proudest scar I bear.

✣

Having said goodbye to publishing, I embarked happily on a freelance career, writing reviews for *Yawn*, *Witter*, the *Weekly Somnambulist* and other papers too numerous to mention. Knowing something of my tastes and inclinations, Richard Ingrams was kind enough to offer me a job on the *Oldie*, where I... [*continues for hundreds of pages*]

LIBRARY NEWS

■ THE East End's rich local history collection faces being broken up and kicked out of its home in Tower Hamlets.

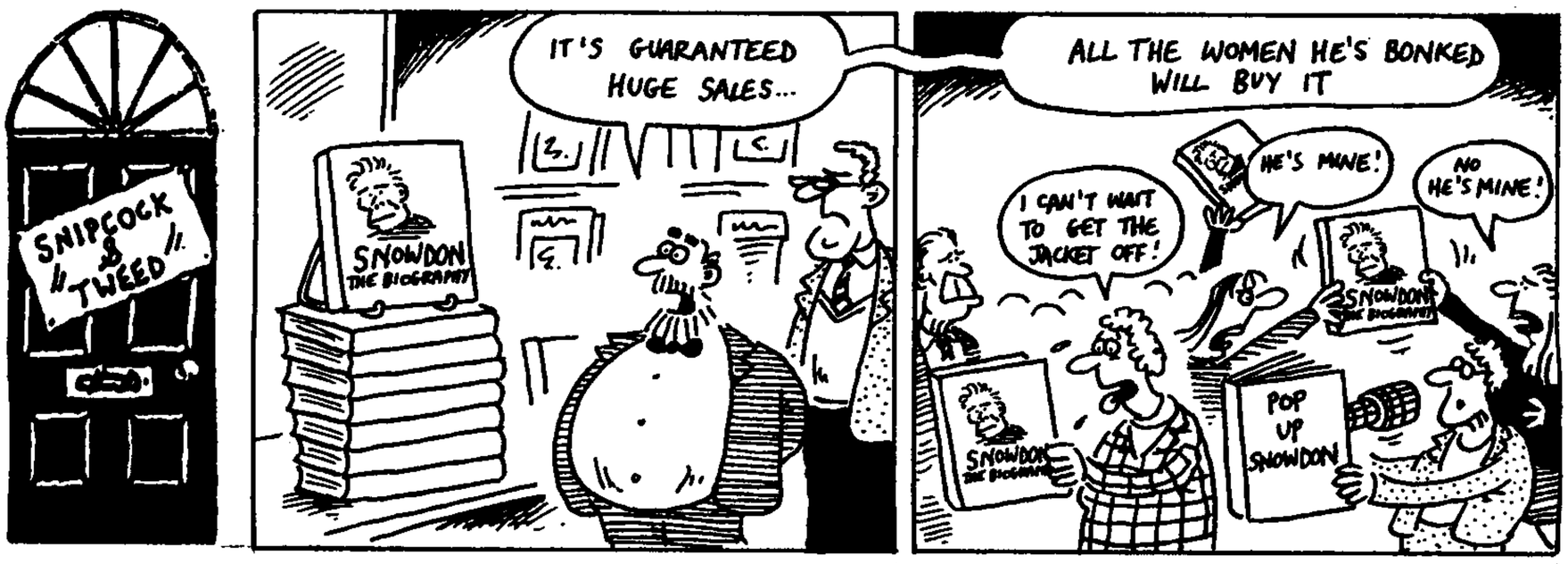
Two years ago the council moved most of the Bancroft Road library into the shiny new "Idea Store", leaving just the East End Archive in the magnificent old Vestry Hall building. Now it plans to flog the hall to Queen Mary College for £1.2m.

The collection of documents, artefacts and pictures would be divvied up between the Royal Hospital depository in Whitechapel and the Museum in Docklands until a new home is found. But historians and researchers fear that finding a new home will not be a high priority, given the way the council has treated the archive in recent years.

In a recent survey by the National Archives, Tower Hamlets' archive service rated just one pathetic star. Despite being one of the finest local collections in the country, it has two remaining staff (compared to 14 in Westminster's local history centre).

Heritage campaigner Tom Ridge described the archive as "a priceless asset in one of the borough's finest historic public buildings, [that] must be maintained and improved for present and future generations."

The *East London Advertiser*, whose own archives form part of the collection, is running a Save Our History campaign at www.eastlondonadvertiser.co.uk.


SNIPCOCK & TWEED
IT'S GUARANTEED HUGE SALES...
SNOWDON THE BIOGRAPHY
ALL THE WOMEN HE'S BONKED WILL BUY IT
I CAN'T WAIT TO GET THE JACKET OFF!
HE'S MINE!
NO HE'S MINE!
POP UP SNOWDON

Private Eye's Worstseller Chart – Sex Dossier Sell

Position	Author	Title	Published	Hype	Revelation	Sales
1	Patrick French	*The World Is What It Is: The Authorized Biography of V.S. Naipaul*	Picador, March	Serialisation in *Daily Telegraph*, Samuel Johnson prize nomination	He shagged everyone, sadomasochistically	1,414
2	Ffion Hague	*The Pain And The Privilege: The Women in Lloyd George's Life*	Harper Press, June	Radio 4 Book of the Week	He shagged everyone and was hung like a donkey	805
3	Anne de Courcy	*Snowdon: The Biography*	Weidenfeld & Nicholson, June	Serialisation in *Daily Mail*, Channel 4 documentary	He shagged everyone and had a love child with his best friend's wife	695
4	Katie Roiphe	*Uncommon Arrangements: Seven Portraits of Married Life in London Literary Circles 1919-1939*	Virago, June	Reviews in most broadsheets	They all shagged everyone, simultaneously	281
5	Julian Evans	*Semi-Invisible Man: The Life of Norman Lewis*	Jonathan Cape, June	Reviews in every broadsheet	He shagged everyone and had love children with most of them	141

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

SATANIC PANIC

■ DESPITE the lack of evidence for the existence of Satanic ritual abuse, a book is to be published in Britain in September featuring chapters written by some of its most prolific proponents.

To believe in Satanic or ritual abuse (the terms are used interchangeably), you accept that devil-worshipping paedophiles go round sexually abusing children, sacrificing animals, drinking blood, eating faeces and breeding babies for abortion and/or sacrifice. Countless investigations have concluded there is no physical, forensic or corroborating evidence for this myth.

Nevertheless the scientific-sounding *Forensic Aspects of Dissociative Identity Disorder*, published by Karnac Books, is being marketed as essential reading for professionals in the field of child protection and adult psychotherapy. Contributors are from the ritual abuse "survivor" movement which is growing around the world and comprises psychologists, psychotherapists, counsellors, social workers, sociologists, survivors and a new breed of "survivor advocate".

The book's contributors include many names already familiar to *Eye* readers: Dr Joan Coleman, founder of RAINS (Ritual Abuse Information Network and Support), writing on "Satanist Ritual Abuse and the Problem of Credibility"; Valerie Sinason PhD, a child and adult psychologist and psychotherapist who practises in Harley Street and has written two chapters, including "When murder moves inside"; and Ellen Lacter PhD, a psychologist from San Diego, California, who writes about "Mind Control: Simple to Complex".

Like all flat-earthers, believers in ritual abuse refuse to accept they have been proved wrong and continue to promote the myth and provide mutual support. *Eye* readers may recall Coleman, Sinason and Lacter have all written letters for publication in support of each other.

When news of this book reached Professor Jean La Fontaine, who conducted the official UK government inquiry into the existence of ritual abuse and concluded, definitively, in 1994 that it was a myth, her reaction was succinct. "It fills me with rage," she told the *Eye*.

'Bookworm'

MUSIC & MUSICIANS

HEADS were shaking in disbelief on Aldeburgh seafront last week thanks to the preface to the Aldeburgh Festival programme book.

It contained a delirious hagiography-cum-essay on "the Ades years", a tribute to whizzkid composer Thomas Ades who is stepping down after ten years as artistic director. In moist-eyed prose it tries to chronicle his achievements and ponder what his "legacy" might be. To which the blunt answer is: "bugger all".

Ades has done little more than lend his name to Aldeburgh. He's given the odd concert or premiered one of his own scores, but by and large he's been noticeable by his absence – usually too busy chasing deadlines on his many commissions for the Berlin Philharmonic, Royal Opera House and other glamorous recipients.

When he *has* deigned to put in an appearance, he's been so condescendingly aloof many rank-and-file Aldeburgh-ites wished he hadn't bothered. And his behind-the-scenes role in organising the festival programmes has been fairly neglible too. Most of the graft has been done by fellow-composer John Woolrich. And at one point in the "Ades years", Aldeburgh got so exasperated by the unavailabilty of its so-called director it had to appoint a second person, Meurig Bowen, to help do the job.

Where Ades has made an identifiable contribution, steering the programmes towards certain composers, they have tended to be the wrong ones: brutalists like Richard Ayres and Gerald Barry whose works have stuck in the gorge of Aldeburgh audiences, and dim lights like Yannis Kyriakides whose new opera, *An Ocean or Rain*, opened the 2008 festival and sank under bad reviews.

"He may be a world-famous composer, but he's done nothing for Aldeburgh," said one festival regular."Let's hope his successor [*pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard*] shows a bit more interest."

'Lunchtime O'Boulez'

EYE TOLD YOU SO

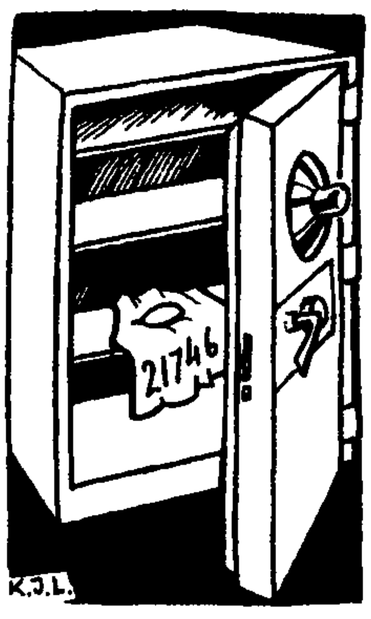
"What he obviously deserves now isn't just a Prom. Let's hear it for a knighthood. Or a Nobel prize"
– *Private Eye* 13/6/08

"Michael Nyman awarded CBE"
– *Birthday Honours*, 14/6/08

So he suffers for us. He bears our pain, in the most public way possible. He serves a timeless human need, one that goes back long before the time of Christ. He carries our burdens and cannot lay them down. Perhaps this has always been Paul Gascoigne's destiny.

RICHARD MADELEY,
Daily Express

The *Independent* is pleased to offer '21746' (2008) by Tracey Emin exclusively for readers at the special launch price of £2,800. '21746' (2008) is a white chalk pebble wrapped in a hand-embroidered cotton sheet measuring 11 x 15 x 16 cm (4 x 6 x 6.5 in). It has been published by Counter Editions, London, in an edition of 25, and comes with a certificate signed by the artist.



***Independent* promotion**

Pseuds Corner

Believe me, trapeze school was Mary-Kate's idea. I had emailed her a few days before and suggested we see the Philip Glass opera Satyagraha at the Met or peruse the Christian Louboutin show at the FIT museum. 'I don't know,' she tells me now, handing the release form back to the receptionist. 'I was sitting in China, and I thought: trapeze class!' That one sentence – absurdly fabulous and fearless at once – pretty much sums up this 22 year-old child-woman in my presence.

KEVIN SESSUMS interviews MARY-KATE OLSEN, *Elle*

[Hanif] Kureishi also said that when he goes to his desk each morning to commence writing, he thinks to himself: 'Why am I doing this? Shall I commit suicide?'

Guardian

Don't Leave Me This Way marks a change in Franko B's performance practice, formalising his departure from blood-based work into the realm of the metaphorical. Here he allows the viewer time to look at his naked body and approach it as a sculptural form, heavily tattooed and scarred, voluptuous in shape and size, either as part of a collective audience or in a one-to-one encounter.

Co-created with lighting designer Kamal Ackarie, lighting techniques will mimic the effect that Franko's bleeding body has on audience members, while opening up a new range of emotional and bodily responses. Franko B's work leaves metaphorical marks on the psyches of vulnerable spectators, moving empathetic viewers with the visceral charge of the prone body.

Please note this performance contains nudity.

'Live Arts at the ICA'

CONTRIBUTORS: Rosemary Fong, Dave McAllister, Didi Messerli, Charles Sandeman-Allen, Zoe Grainge.

£10 paid for all entries

IN THE BACK

SNOUTS IN TROUGH 1: SHAREHOLDER EXECUTIVE

Rolling schmooze bulletin

A FREEDOM of information request from *Private Eye* has revealed the extent to which the bankers-turned-civil servants who run the government's Shareholder Executive are being wined, dined and pampered almost daily by those who gain most from their decisions.

The executive was set up in 2003 to look after the taxpayer's stake in 27 different corporations: everything from the Royal Mail to cleaning up nuclear waste. Yet since then decisions on post office closures, nuclear sell-offs, the QinetiQ flotation and much else besides have given more cheer to the bankers and consultants circling them than to the public who own them. And no wonder.

In three years up to this March, Shareholder Executive (SE) bosses, currently led by Stephen Lovegrove from Deutsche Bank, were taken out 389 times to lunches, dinners, operas and sporting events. Among the regular schmoozers were the nuclear firms, including British Energy and British Nuclear Fuels, and favoured bankers eyeing up nuclear expansion including UBS and Rothschild.

The man responsible for BNFL and British Energy until he left late last year, Hugo Robson, was particularly open to a junket from those with an interest in the soon-to-boom nuclear business. Nuclear bankers keen for his company included: Lehman Brothers (trip to Stella Artois tennis tournament and Twickenham for the rugby); Citigroup (opera and rugby); Rothschild (day out at Wimbledon); and Deutsche Bank (a day at the World Cup rugby in Paris last year). The German bank also took Lovegrove to the England v France semi-final.

Campaigners trying to save post offices won't be surprised at the sucking up by Royal Mail bosses anxious to force through closures (not least in pursuit of the seven-figure bonus schemes the SE would have to approve) – just as decisions on the network were being made by ministers on the advice of the SE officials (an arrangement later heavily criticised by MPs).

Shortly before the then trade secretary Alistair Darling announced the outcome of a "consultation", confirming 2,500 closures in face of nationwide protests, SE boss Lovegrove was lunching with the Royal Mail bosses at the Cinnamon club and dining with them at Bleeding Heart, self-styled "destination of choice of the corporate aristocracy".

Others with money to blow in London's restaurants included publicly-owned international development fund CDC, whose bosses took the SE's Mark Turner to upmarket eateries Bank, Gettis and Quaglino's as the fund pulled out of food production in the Third World. That should help avert any awkward questions about the fund's strategy and chief executive Richard Laing's £1m+ pay – a 300-percent rise in just five years (see below).

Still, at least the Shareholder Executive could just about list who took its bigwigs out. Several other Whitehall departments simply won't answer because, in breach of their own rules and the civil service code, they don't keep records. A Foreign Office official admitted to the *Eye*: "Well, yeah, it's not best practice."

PS: Following *Eye* revelations that top brass at Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs have been treated by the taxpayer to £85-a-head meals (including £25 booze) at Shepherd's in Westminster with no tax consequences – even though HMRC guidance says they should be taxed on the freebies (*Eyes* 1210 and 1211) – several business people have started to question HMRC's double standards on business entertaining.

One reader's MP even received a letter from acting HMRC chairman Dave Hartnett on the point not so long ago. "It is a matter of government policy that business entertainment is not allowed as a deduction for tax purposes," insisted Hartnett sternly. Er, except, it seems, if you're a director of the Revenue!

SNOUT IN TROUGH 2: ACTIS

A capital idea!

WHEN the new bosses of Actis, the privatized fund management arm of the government's international development fund CDC, started trousering millions (*Eyes passim ad nauseam*), the man left in charge of the CDC fund itself was also dipping his snout in the trough courtesy of an incentive scheme dreamt up by consultants McKinsey.

CDC's fund management arm was given its silly name and sold in 2004. By 2007 the pay of CDC's Richard Laing had quadrupled to more than £1m thanks to the scheme, which works by awarding him bonuses according to certain targets (the details of which CDC wouldn't disclose) for "investment returns", "new capital" and "development".

After several months, however, CDC has finally admitted how much each contributes to the pot and, strangely for a development fund, the most important element is... not development! Eighty percent of the bonus is determined by financial returns on investment and the amount of new capital attracted to the fund, with "development impact" – or what the fund actually achieves on the ground – accounting for just 20 percent.

With cash four times as important as development to the boss's pay packet, it's no surprise that CDC continues to move out of important developing world businesses that yield smaller profits, like agriculture, and into those that earn the big bucks and could attract private sector money anyway: eg mobile phones and shopping centres.

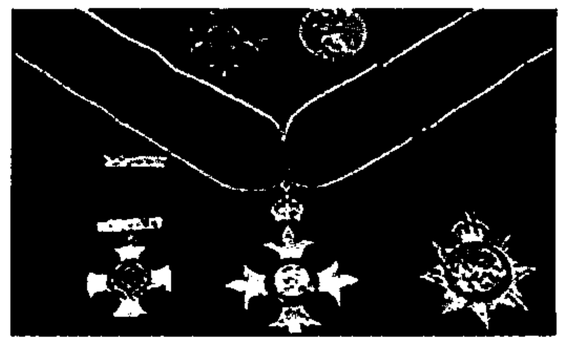
That the hugely lucrative (for some) Actis/CDC debacle could have been allowed to happen is especially shocking when one considers the attitude of the Commons public accounts committee and its stern chairman Edward Leigh to earlier taxpayer rip-offs. "Never again should civil servants be permitted to pursue such a self-interested stratagem," he declared in his report into the scandalous privatisation of the defence evaluation and research agency, aka QinetiQ. (By the time QinetiQ was floated in 2006, shares awarded to bosses led by chairman Sir John Chisholm in 2003 were worth 200 times what they had paid for them).

Despite this managers at CDC pursued an even more self-interested stratagem in the creation and sale of Actis in 2004. Unlike QinetiQ, there wasn't even any external competition for the lucrative business. As the then international development secretary Hilary Benn explained, this was "to avoid disruption to CDC's business".

And so it was that in return for paying just £373,000 between them (and then receiving a "post transaction bonus" of £2.3m), the bosses led by CDC chief executive Paul Fletcher were able to buy a business generating millions in income every year. As if that weren't enough, there were also tens of millions in "carried interest" shares of profits on selling CDC investments, which as capital gains are barely taxed.

The sale had to be approved by an "independent board", but how "independent" was it? It comprised Fletcher and Co's fellow CDC directors, led by Professor Jonathan Kydd and included Tim Parker, the private equity man who decimated the AA – earning him the nickname "prince of darkness" – and who has recently been appointed chairman of Transport for London by Boris Johnson.

BIRTHDAY GONGS



Gordon's roll of dishonour

GORDON BROWN is clearly impressed with train company FirstGroup even if passengers on its First Great Western subsidiary aren't. Despite its raising fares beyond the legal maximum, facing a commuter "strike" and breaching franchise agreements, FirstGroup boss Moir Lockhead was given a knighthood in the Queen's birthday honours to add to his £1m salary.

Gordon also demonstrated Labour's continuing enthusiasm for the arms trade by giving an OBE to **Guy Griffiths**, managing director of **BAE Systems**. Last year Griffiths was tipped to become head of the government arms sales unit, DESO, but Brown delighted anti-arms trade campaigners when he announced he was going to abolish DESO and stop this special support for international weapons sales. He then changed his mind and simply changed DESO's name instead.

Elsewhere the latest honours list contained slightly fewer business figures than usual, but Brown at least made sure that business-minded public servants were rewarded. There was a knighthood for **Len Fenwick**, chief executive of **Newcastle-upon-Tyne Hospitals Trust**, where he introduced an expensive PFI scheme. And **Stuart Bell**, chief executive of the **Maudsley NHS Trust**, south London's famous mental hospital, got an OBE. Last year Bell ignored protesting patients and closed down the hospital's emergency clinic, forcing mental health patients to attend general A&E instead when they were having a crisis.

Richard Gillingwater, outgoing chairman of the government's **Shareholder Executive**, also got an OBE. Gillingwater's job was to put government-owned firms on a businesslike footing, including backing public-spirited and popular schemes such as, er, post office closures (see accompanying article, left).

One honour had a distinctly Blairite feel: that of the CBE for British businessman **Raj Loomba** and his charity work supporting poor widows in India through his Loomba Trust. The fact that Cherie Blair is president of the trust probably helps.

Loomba built an all-star board of patrons and trustees – including Baroness Jay, Baroness Helena Kennedy, Ken Livingstone, Charles Kennedy, David Cameron and Menzies Campbell – which would be the envy of some much bigger charities. Backing from the right people obviously helped too.

Meanwhile the new head of the **National Audit Office, Tim Burr** becomes a Companion of the Order of the Bath, reward for, er, failing to act for eight years as deputy to his junketing predecessor Sir John Bourn. Burr sat on the audit committee that somehow failed to spot or report Bourn's excesses until the *Eye* pointed them out.

Similarly elevated, months after the government's famous "light touch" regime saw Northern Rock implode, is **Michael Snyder,** until recently the influential **City of London Corporation** policy chairman and long-standing lobbyist for minimal regulation of the City's bankers.

Borders and Immigration Agency chief **Lin Homer** becomes a DBE despite a less than spotless public service record. She was head of Birmingham council during a massive electoral fraud in 2005 when, a judge said, the council "threw the rule book out of the window". Since then she has presided over an asylum system described in a recent independent report as "shameful".

LOCKERBIE APPEAL

To Crown it all

UNLESS the Scottish judiciary resists blatant meddling from Westminster, the forthcoming appeal of Ali Mohmed al-Megrahi (pictured), jailed for life for the Lockerbie bombing, is in danger of descending into fiasco.

Not only is the Foreign Office trying to keep secret intelligence documents that are crucial to the Libyan's defence by claiming public interest immunity (PII) on them (see *Eye* 1201), but the Crown Office is now seeking to limit Megrahi's appeal too.

Crown lawyers want the appeal restricted to the six grounds cited last year by the Scottish criminal cases review commission (SCCRC). Because one of those grounds relates to documents which the UK government wants kept secret, the United Nations special observer, Dr Hans Kochler, has already said the appeal looks more like an "intelligence operation" than a fair hearing.

To try now to limit the scope of the appeal will underscore Kochler's belief and confirm the view of many, including some of the victims' families, that the government does not want the truth to emerge about how and why Pan Am flight 103 was blasted from the sky nearly 20 years ago, killing 270 people.

The secret documents relate indirectly to the timing device alleged to have detonated the bomb and said to provide the crucial link to both Libya and Megrahi. Recent leaks to two Scottish newspapers suggest the documents are German in origin and cast doubt on the Libyan connection. *Scotland on Sunday* quoted a source who had seen the material saying it held "considerable detail" and "appeared to confirm that the method of attack was typical of a Palestinian terror cell in Germany".

A Syrian-backed Palestinian terrorist cell operating out of Frankfurt was of course broken by German police two months before Lockerbie. Altitude sensitive bombs packed in cassette recorders were found in their flat. It was calculated that they would blow an aircraft up around 40 minutes after take off – spookily similar to the fate of Pan Am 103 after it left Heathrow.

The Palestinians were the main suspects for the Pan Am bombing for well over a year – until the investigation suddenly switched to Libya and Megrahi with the purported discovery of a tiny fragment of circuit board said to come from a Swiss-made MST 13 timer.

How the fragment was found and later identified by UK scientists and US investigators has always been highly contentious. Thus any evidence about the timer is central to Megrahi's defence. As well as seeking disclosure of the secret material, it is understood his lawyers want to introduce the results of independent forensic tests casting further doubt on the evidence given about the timer – unless the Crown Office succeeds in limiting the scope of the appeal.

UNFAIR DISMISSAL

Scope loses its head

WHEN headteacher Carole Oviatt-Ham was dismissed from Rutland House last year, anguished parents demanded an explanation from Scope, the disability charity that runs the Nottingham special residential school. Charity bosses insisted they were dealing with "difficult issues" and that they were "happy that this was handled within our policies and procedures".

Mrs Oviatt-Ham had been head of the school for children with severe disabilities for the entire 28 years it had been open. She denied allegations that she had bullied a parent and made a child protection referral without proper discussion. After her dismissal last April, she sent a letter to parents as a parting shot, saying management wanted her out and that she had been "made to feel as though I didn't fit the mould, as though I was past it".

This month Scope wrote to all parents saying, in a massive climbdown, that it had settled the tribunal claim for an undisclosed sum. "The dismissal did not fall within the band of reasonable responses by an employer," read the letter. "Scope accepts that Carole did not commit gross misconduct. Scope admits that Carole Oviatt-Ham was unfairly and wrongly dismissed."

Mrs Oviatt-Ham is no longer able to discuss the case due to a gagging order in her settlement, but the parent of a former Rutland House pupil told the *Eye* that the number of pupils at the school has now dropped from around 25 to fewer than 14, which is not sustainable.

"The whole future of the school is in question," he said. "It was absolutely fantastic and now it's all in jeopardy, while a dedicated teacher had her career ruined and reputation besmirched."

So does the school have a future? In 2005, Scope took out a full-page advert in the *Times Educational Supplement* to deny that it was about to close all its services for disabled children to concentrate on campaigning against disablism. However, Scope's chief executive at the time, Tony Manwaring, insisted the charity was "deeply committed to changing the shape" of its schools and colleges and moving towards inclusion in mainstream education (*Eye* 1148).

PUBLIC GUARDIANS

Dying for change

WHEN independent financial adviser Andrew Sellers agreed in January to act as an attorney, under lasting powers of attorney, for an elderly client, he filled in the 52 pages of paperwork and sent it off, enclosing the £150 fee. Although the government office that deals with applications is supposed to reply within 15 days, it still hadn't responded by the time his client, Margaret Marshall, had died two months later.

Mr Sellers contacted the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG) to let it know he no longer needed the powers and asked for his application fee to be returned. Its reply? "As this is a statutory fee payable upon application, we are prevented by government accounting rules from making a refund due to delays or errors by this office." Nice work if you can get it!

OPG opened for business last October and was immediately swamped with more than 9,000 applications for powers of attorney in its first three months, far more than had been expected. The "living wills", which replace the old enduring powers of attorney, allow friends, family or trusted professionals legal powers over a person's financial affairs if they become incapacitated. Earlier this year, Sir Mark Potter, president of the family division, described the OPG as "all but overwhelmed" by the workload.

Martin John, who was newly appointed Public Guardian last week, said the OPG "faces some key challenges in dealing with the processing of lasting powers of attorney and extra resources have been brought in to tackle the delays".

The Ministry of Justice told the *Eye*: "No refund is payable automatically by the Office of the Public Guardian if... the target is missed and the person who lacks capacity or the applicant dies before reply." It has now offered Mr Sellers compensation, but he plans to take up the matter with the Adjudicator's Office.

MISSING JIHADIST

Yeah but no Butt...

WHILE the high court was last week weighing up the delicate balance between protecting journalists' confidential sources and protecting state security, the man at the centre of the battle, self-confessed reformed Jihadist Hassan Butt, has done a bunk.

Last month Butt was arrested on suspicion of terrorist offences as he was about to board a plane to Pakistan; but after 12 days' detention he was released without charge. Now he is reported to be in, er, Pakistan.

Inspector Knacker is perhaps unsurprisingly not keen to discuss Butt's exit, saying only that under the terms of the terrorism act under which he was detained, he was not on police bail when released. Not Knacker's fault, in other words – although one might have thought someone would be keeping an eye on Butt or that they might have at least removed his passport. Indeed, Lord Justice Dyson said in court last week that Butt's own account of his participation in al-Qaeda activities was "chilling", a "decade of killing for killing's sake".

However, there has always been a curious ambivalence towards the 28-year-old Butt on the part of the police, the security services and the government, ever since he declared on television and in the press 18 months ago that he was renouncing his former life.

In fact Butt was arrested at the airport only after journalist Shiv Malik launched his high court challenge to a wide-ranging court order forcing him to disclose all his raw material for a book he was writing about Butt. Malik had been arguing that as Butt was his main source, police could have gone and interviewed him themselves.

However, during his 12 days of detention Butt denied everything, saying he had made up stories of murder, and of recruiting and fund-raising for terrorists, in order to make money and achieve fame.

Greater Manchester police had obtained a court order preventing anyone reporting whether it had reached any conclusions about whether Butt was a terrorist or a fantasist. But, curiously, police held a press briefing for some reporters in which they took the highly unusual step of releasing parts of Butt's interviews, which allowed at least some journalists (*Channel 4 News*) to conclude that Butt was indeed something of a Walter Mitty.

Yet Butt features in evidence and intelligence material presented in terrorist cases here and in the US, suggesting it isn't all made up. Indeed, several of his associates have been under surveillance by MI5 and MI6, which makes his ability to flee to Pakistan under the noses of the police all the more extraordinary – even if it does remove the immediate difficulty of what to do about him!

● Malik, meanwhile, has won a partial victory over the order to produce all his source material for his book. Lord Justice Dyson said the order was right "in principle" but also that its scope was far too wide. Malik, an acknowledged expert on Islamic terrorism, welcomed the ruling, saying it denied the police the right to go on "unlimited fishing expeditions" for information and that it recognised the importance of protecting sources of information.

NUMBER CRUNCHING

£9m Cost of concessions to Ulster Unionists which John Major denied making to win their support in crucial BSE vote in dying days of his government

£1.2bn Cost of concessions to Democratic Unionists which Gordon Brown denies making to win their support in crucial 42 days vote this month

In the Back continues overleaf ➤

DEFENCE SPECIAL

HELICOPTERS

MoD takes it on the Chinook

THE National Audit Office (NAO) report into the Ministry of Defence's purchase of unusable Chinook helicopters and its ineffectual attempts to fix them makes grim reading. Between them the MoD and Boeing have spent years – and many millions – on a helicopter that could be saving British lives in Iraq and Afghanistan but isn't.

Back in 2001 the government bought eight supposedly upgraded "Mark 3" Chinooks, then realised they couldn't be sure they were safe to fly. Changes to the computers and displays on the old Mark 2s could not be reliably tested to show they would work safely. Six years and £500m later, the helicopters are sitting in "climate-controlled, de-humidified aircraft shelters" near Bournemouth, and will stay there until 2010.

The MoD first tried one repair job, called "fix to field", taking out some of the advance features but leaving others in. Then in early 2007 it junked "fix to field" for a cruder repair called "reversion". All the new kit would be ripped out of the cockpit, "reverting" the craft to old style Mark 2 Chinooks. As the NAO says, the MoD's decision making was "protracted". Had it "progressed the Fix-to-Field project more quickly, the Reversion project would have been unnecessary".

Most shockingly, the last-minute decision to give up "fixing" the Chinooks and "revert" them was taken in a panic. The NAO says that from mid-2006 the MoD began to "urgently search for ways to quickly and significantly increase the levels of helicopter capability" because of the "increased tempo of war" in Afghanistan and because of the "the threat from road-side bombs" in Iraq. The army wanted to ship troops by air to avoid roadside bombs on the ground which are continuing to claim British service personnel lives.

This sudden urgent search for extra helicopter capacity suggests the ministry – presumably up to ministerial level – only realised that the Afghan and Iraq wars were still a huge challenge in 2006.

Many assumed that former defence secretary John Reid's assertion that Britain could take on new tasks in Afghanistan "without a shot being fired", as he put it so un-presciently, was simply bluster and propaganda. This report suggests the MoD really believed it.

The MoD has rightly been roasted for the Chinook cock-up, but Boeing got off lightly. In the original purchase, the NAO notes: "Although Boeing met its contractual obligations, the avionics software could not be shown to meet United Kingdom standards." The MoD forgot to write access to Boeing's computer "source code" in the contract, and so could not test the "avionics".

Boeing was in no hurry to help and "resisted the department's requests for access to the source code". The NAO says the MoD had no "leverage" with Boeing. But why not? Boeing is one of the world's biggest arms firms and part of the international security establishment. In the UK its boss is Sir Roger Bone, a former private secretary to the Foreign Secretary; and it has "partnering" contracts worth £1bn looking after other Chinooks. But none of this could persuade Boeing to help the MoD, even in the middle of two wars.

Boeing then delayed the "fix to field" attempt to repair the Chinooks by arguing over money. Finally, when the MoD gave up and decided to rip out all the new kit and "revert" the choppers to their more primitive state, Boeing got the £58m contract to do the work.

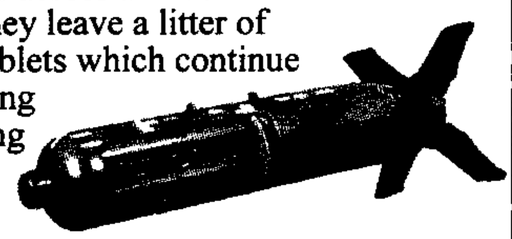
Amazingly, Boeing is very proud of winning the contract to undo the work it did to its own helicopters. It even held a signing ceremony for the "reversion" at which Vice President Jim O'Neill described the contract as "a wonderful example of working together to achieve an expanded mission ready fleet".

CLUSTER MUNITIONS

Ten bombs or less?

GORDON BROWN's insistence that Britain should sign up to the recent Dublin anti-cluster bomb treaty delivered less than it promised.

Cluster bombs are a single weapon that delivers a multitude of "bomblets" to kill troops and destroy tanks across a wide area. Unfortunately, they leave a litter of unexploded bomblets which continue killing and injuring people – including many children – long after the conflict.



The British prime minister didn't just sign up to the treaty, however: his diplomats added their own legalistic clauses. The first said: "Cluster munition means a munition which contains more than 10 conventional sub-munitions." And why the magic number 10? Er, because one of the Americans' favourite weapons, the CBU-97, contains just 10 "sub-munitions" and so squeaks through the amended treaty.

Everyone knows it is a cluster bomb – CBU stands for Cluster Bomb Unit – but thanks to Gordon's representatives, it is still free to cause unintended damage and fatalities. This is not only a favour to America's outgoing president George Bush: it also suggests the RAF may look hard at a CBU-97 purchase soon, along with other cluster weapons available in the "10 items or less" queue currently being bought by the British army. Existing British stockpiles of cluster weapons will soon be past their sell-by date, so these escape clauses make a big difference.

British diplomats also insisted the presence of a "self-destruct system" stops a cluster bomb from being a cluster bomb. Bomblets that destroy themselves won't hang around the battlefield for years, but the reliability of these self-destruct mechanisms is not always as good as advertised.

TRAINING

The Metrix miscalculation

IT'S not just *Private Eye* that suspects that privatising defence training could turn out to be one of Labour's more toxic legacies. So does the Ministry of Defence.

Documents produced following a recent meeting of the "defence training review executive board" reveal that the project, under which training will be handed to the Metrix consortium through a 30-year PFI contract worth around £11bn, poses catastrophic risks on the frontline.

A confidential "post meeting read out" of deliberations led by deputy chief of defence staff (personnel) Vice Admiral Peter Wilkinson exposes "major affordability issues" requiring a "realistic contingency plan" for the deal to privatise training on everything from tanks to fighter jets. Hinting at serious difficulties on the deal, the "affordability gap" could not be disclosed even to the project board as it was "too sensitive".

More alarming still was a list of 15 significant risks with the project, including some that will fill the military on engagements around the world with dread. "Trained output fails to meet requirement of operational commands" is one of them, on the grounds that "there is a risk that the Metrix solution will not be able to deliver the numbers of suitably trained personnel that are required and/or that the training output is not to a sufficiently high standard."

Echoing concerns of MoD staff who suspect that companies like EDS, Serco, QinetiQ and Nord Anglia that make up the Metrix consortium don't have the defence of the realm as their highest priority, a "lack of military ethos" is also seen as a danger with devastating consequences. "There is a risk that the measures to instil military ethos… provided by the Metrix solution fail to deliver the desired level of military discipline, ethos and culture that is required and that trainees will leave the training establishment ill-prepared for service in operational commands", notes the MoD. This would impair "their ability to perform at full operational effectiveness when they join their unit".

Pictured: Vice Admiral Peter Wilkinson (top) and Des Brown

Among other concerns are: a loss of existing defence trainers who appear unwilling to move to a new defence academy at St Athan, South Wales, from their existing bases (72 percent have said they won't) and the inability of Metrix to recruit suitable replacements; "inconsistencies in training standards" between privatised training and the limited training that stays in-house; lack of accommodation due to planning blight, leading to "further damage [to] the reputation of MoD and the morale of both trainers and trainees"; "a risk that as a result of the 2012 Olympics construction and other MoD projects in the region… construction industry capacity will be exceeded"; and the prospect of delays in planning permission for the new academy as "the possible need for public consultation… could lead to programme delays, including undermine [*sic*] potential solutions".

Certain risks are deemed "intolerable". In particular, the scheme depends on raising millions from the sale of sites at Arborfield and Bordon. If planning for housing is not obtained soon, sites will be much less valuable, "impacting on the affordability of the project as a whole".

Equally intolerable – unlike the failure to meet the military's operational needs, which is presumably tolerable – is the prospect of the deal losing its off-balance sheet PFI magic. New government accounting rules are due to bring PFI investments, of which this project contains around £750m, on balance sheet. "There is a risk that the [project] will not receive exemption from the accounting rules…" notes the board, adding ominously: "The consequence of this would be to make the project unaffordable... and therefore prevent the project from progressing in its current form."

Eighteen months ago defence minister Des Browne admitted that PFI was only chosen for defence training because it would take investment off balance sheet (*Eye* 1177), inviting the disastrous consequences his officials are now admitting. But even the accounting "benefit" (to the government's books but nobody else) is now disappearing, leaving nothing more than a handful of private companies presiding over an expensive shambles. Just what the forces soon packing their bags for Helmand need.

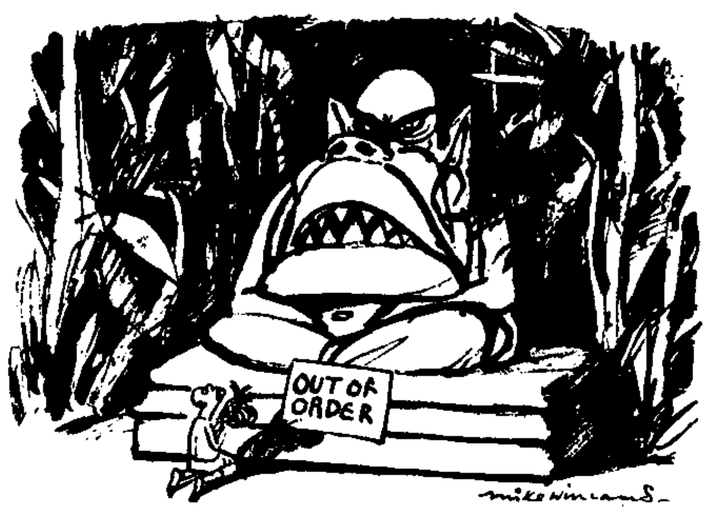
You can contact the In the Back team on 020 7437 4017 or email: strobes@private-eye.co.uk

In the City

THE implicit conclusion of the review of the Serious Farce Office conducted by former New York prosecutor Jessica de Grazia is that the SFO is a failing agency not fit for purpose.

The criticisms are so severe – "the current legal senior management team has had a number of years to prove whether it can deliver change and has failed to do so" – that if former director Robert Wardle had still been in charge when the review was published two weeks ago, he would probably have had to resign.

It was announced last month that Wardle was to join major law firm DLA Piper as a consultant. However, it is still not clear when he will be able to join, as the appointment is still under review by the advisory committee on business appointments, the Whitehall body that vets jobs for former senior civil servants and can delay such moves for up to 12 months.



Wardle was persuaded to jointly commission the report by the then Attorney General Lord Goldsmith, who was no fan of Wardle or of the SFO. However, the criticisms must in part also be directed at his predecessors, Rosalind Wright and George Staple.

A similar critical review of the old Department of Timidy & Inaction's poorly performing investigations arm was not published to avoid embarrassment. But there is no similar hiding place for the SFO.

The response of the new director, former senior HMRC lawyer Richard "Grey Man" Alderman, has been to decapitate the top SFO management, which was so heavily criticised by De Grazia. Four assistant directors have gone or are going, along with the deputy director, the head of accountancy and the head of policy.

The word inside the SFO is that the initial draft of the De Grazia report was so critical, including naming those she considered part of the "risk averse… pass-the-buck… complaint… culture of delay… overwhelmed… unfocused" regime, that it was rejected by Wardle as unacceptable, if not defamatory. The review is believed to have gone through several drafts before it was published.

Grey Man had clearly signed up for the report before taking over in April. It is suggested that these changes were already accepted by Attorney General Baroness Scotland and that the Treasury had provided a special budget for required redundancies.

So Alderman wasted no time in carrying out the executions recommended by De Grazia. However, by not thinking through the consequences of mass departures or briefing those who remain on what was happening and why, he is seen to have worsened the SFO's already low morale – not improved by a delayed pay award.

Helen Garlick, the assistant director in charge of the BAE Systems corruption investigations, was pointed towards the door marked early retirement despite the fact that the SFO decision to drop the Saudi part of the investigation still faces a ruling by the Law Lords next month. Garlick is understood to have always pushed for the Saudi case to go ahead, especially while the SFO could follow the paper trail into the Saudis' Swiss bank accounts.

The Law Lords may well decide to instruct Grey Man to reconsider Wardle's decision, which was made under pressure from Goldsmith and Tony Blair, who in turn was under pressure from the Saudis, to drop the case. On form to date Alderman is unlikely to go against what is still British government policy because of the £20bn Typhoon fighter contract.

Alderman has already dropped what would have been the SFO's first overseas corruption prosecution, into the London-based Energy Financing Team over contracts in the Balkans. Wardle wanted to go ahead, after an investigation which had already lasted several years. But the case had been stuck in Baroness Scotland's office for months until Grey Man announced he was persuaded there was no realistic prospect of a conviction, due to jurisdictional and evidential problems (which had not persuaded Wardle).

Another assistant director pointed towards the exit is Philip Lewis, who has from the start handled the long-running SFO investigation into price fixing of generic drugs supplied to the NHS. This is probably the most high-profile and expensive case on the SFO's books. It is due to go to trial later this year, with a second trial due next year. One of the De Grazia recommendations is for "cradle to grave" case management. Whether Lewis – who may be close to retirement age – will see out these trials remains to be seen, but he has hardly received a vote of confidence.

Other senior SFO figures such as deputy director James Kellock and head of policy Vicky O'Keeffe were told their jobs no longer existed post-De Grazia, so they had to go. Others have transferred elsewhere, such as accountancy head Stephen Low, or have headed for the private sector. Only two of the six assistant directors have been told they can stay.

Just where the SFO will find replacements – other than HMRC, which has already provided a chief operating officer – is a mystery to insiders. Given that the case controllers on average have two years' experience – the better ones tend to leave – this would suggest that experienced prosecutors will need to be found either at the Crown Prosecution Service – whose Fraud Prosecution Service has a far better record with admittedly less difficult cases – or from the criminal bar. Meanwhile, the SFO has to find a chief counsel and directors of investigations and training, as recommended by De Grazia.

Grey Man has carried out his instructions to remove the perceived dead wood without seemingly having any clear personal vision of the way ahead. He is now said to be sounding out those who might provide this vision!

SFO insiders say that there is "nothing new" in most of the De Grazia recommendations and that her ideas had been discussed repeatedly in the past but had failed because of opposition from judges and the Bar. Comparing the successes of the Manhattan District Attorney – where De Grazia once worked – or the US Attorney for the Southern District of Manhattan is comparing apples and pears because of the different legal systems and plea bargain procedures, which will not be applied here any day soon.

One of her main criticisms is the delay and cost caused by the onerous unused material disclosure requirements imposed on the SFO. Disclosure has become even more burdensome given the use of electronic communication creating several terabytes of data for many cases. The onus is now on the SFO to make this unused material available to the defence via detailed schedules, rather than simply adopting the "keys of the warehouse" approach used in the US and previously used by the SFO.

In the NHS case the schedule of unused material is 10,877 pages and contains 135,716 items. Each item could contain multiple pages or electronic files. Producing this took a team of 24 people the equivalent of 13 person years! Disclosure alone is estimated by De Grazia to have added "several million pounds" and "two years" to the NHS case.

This policy, says De Grazia, means the law "encourages the defence to engage in a war of attrition in order to derail a prosecution through an abuse of process application". Only if that fails do defence lawyers then consider whether to advise a guilty plea or roll the dice at trial. But Baroness Scotland immediately stated that she saw no need to change the disclosure rules for complex fraud cases.

The problems and costs of disclosure compete with the efforts to cut the legal aid budget. While the taxpayer is paying – £96m on the most expensive trials in 2005/06 – there is no incentive for economy. Yet as federal judge Barbara Jones asked: "Why does England have a system that assumes the defence knows nothing?"

One of the prosecutors of Tyco's Dennis Kozlowski made the point even better: "With these frauds often the defendants know more about the documents than we could possibly know." Yet when it comes to British fraud trials the SFO has to assume ignorance by defendants.

We have the tough disclosure requirements of today because of the police and prosecutorial crimes of the past which resulted in notorious miscarriages of justice. And those crimes still occur because often the question of what should be disclosed is a matter of interpretation and judgement. The number of fraud cases where this has ever been a factor is small, however. Ironically, former Enron CEO Jeff Skilling is appealing his conviction in part on the non-disclosure of relevant material.

Another problem De Grazia highlights is the requirement that the SFO must "pursue all reasonable lines of enquiry" when investigating, so as to allow for alternative explanations to fraud. This is a tripwire often used in court by defendants; it is costly in time and money and often leads nowhere, but if it is not done then it becomes a stick with which to beat the prosecution.

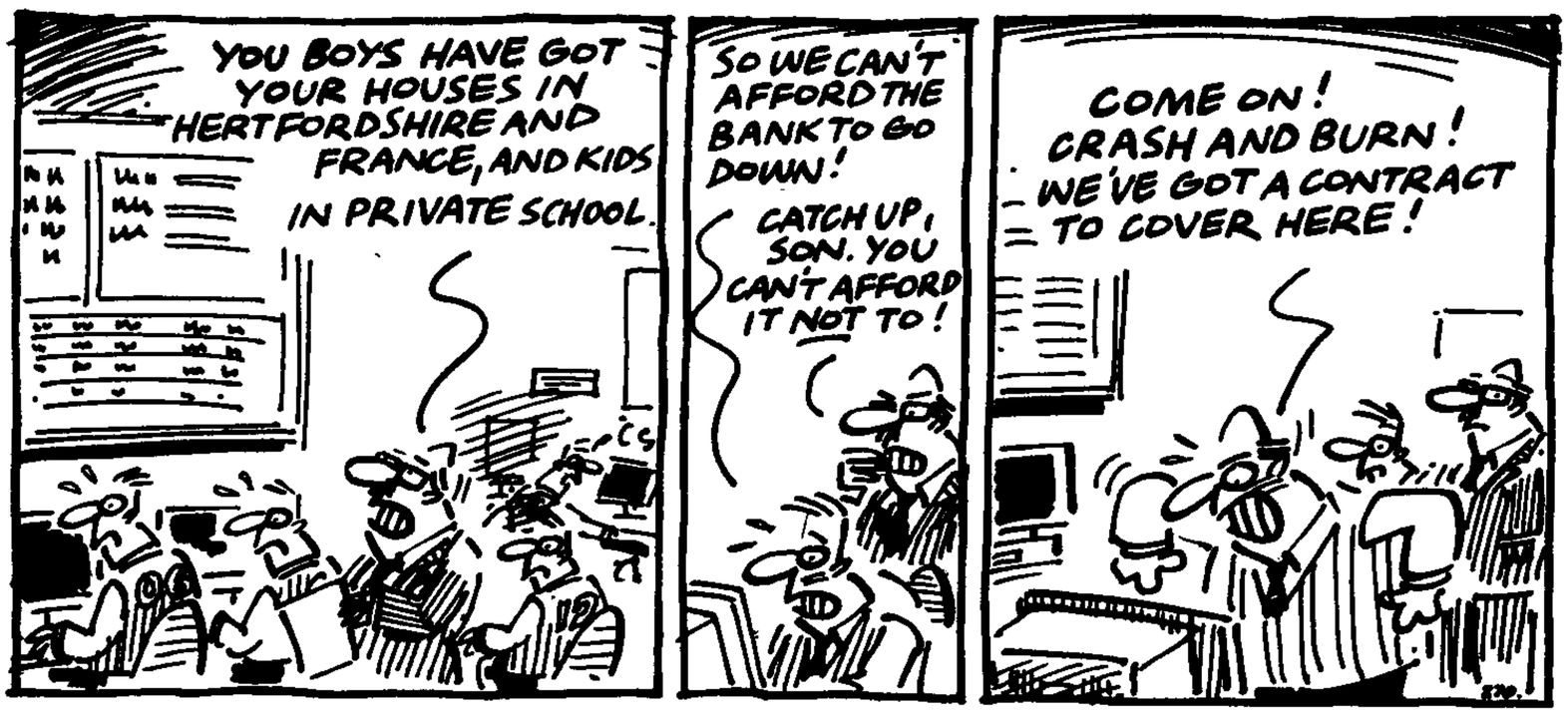
Other De Grazia recommendations – such as omitting written statements when the witness has given evidence by interview – are also likely to run into the usual sniffy British response: "That's the way we do things here."

Making SFO lawyers prosecute their cases in court instead of junior barristers may work in the

☛ *See over...*

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE & RIGG


YOU BOYS HAVE GOT YOUR HOUSES IN HERTFORDSHIRE AND FRANCE, AND KIDS IN PRIVATE SCHOOL.
SO WE CAN'T AFFORD THE BANK TO GO DOWN!
CATCH UP, SON. YOU CAN'T AFFORD IT NOT TO!
COME ON! CRASH AND BURN! WE'VE GOT A CONTRACT TO COVER HERE!

"Who sold you the codpiece?"

US but is unlikely to be welcomed by the Bar, and it would take years to train SFO lawyers to be advocates. Also, unlike in the US, the SFO is not seen as the key to a glittering career in the private sector, so it is never likely to attract the best and the brightest from law schools. And what better than to have outside counsel to blame for an unpopular decision? The SFO has always been far more driven by a fear of failure.

Only a culture change would ensure that trials are jury-friendly and not run for the enrichment of the barristers and lawyers involved for whom time and words are money. As federal judge Richard Berman told De Grazia: "The juries will tell you time and time again that they don't want people to waste their time. They hate long jury recesses in the jury room while lawyers argue… The jury will always tell us, 'We like the way you kept those lawyers in line'."

Berman presided over the New York prosecution of the Rastogi family over the Allied Deals scam. That trial of six defendants – nine pleaded guilty – lasted less than a month. The SFO version, with four defendants, lasted eight months and began 16 months after the New York convictions, even though both investigations began in 2002 (*Eye* 1209).

The Lord Chief Justice protocol sets a target outer limit of three months for very high-cost cases. In January this year there were 77 such cases – nine were estimated to take six months or more and 32 three to six months. So much for trial management by judges in fear of the Appeal Court. Judges and civil servants are always more likely to be criticised for a decision taken than a decision not taken.

Surprisingly, De Grazia suggests that part of the SFO's problems has been a lack of police resources. Given that the City Police is largely devoted to SFO cases, that seems a curious comment. Fraud is never going to be a high priority for police forces outside the City, even the Met. Furthermore, those forces that do have fraud squads want to keep them working on local cases.

The SFO has tried to compensate by hiring retired detectives and training investigators. But the latter are seen as of highly variable quality, so instead much of the forensic work is outsourced at a high cost. Opinions differ as to whether more police are the answer, given the quality of some of the police work, and the SFO with all its "bloody lawyers" is not seen as an attractive employer.

De Grazia hammers the SFO for its falling conviction rate – down from 82 percent to 61 percent since 2003 – despite such recent triumphs as Independent Insurance and Rastogi. The Alderman approach seems to be to go for popular rather than difficult prosecutions – consumer frauds, boiler room share scams and crimes with queues of tearful victims. All of which could raise the question of whether – given the Fundamentally Supine Authority and the CPS Fraud Prosecution Service – there is any need for the SFO at all.

De Grazia's damning indictment of the SFO as inefficient and not cost-effective for its £43m annual budget encourages those who suspect Grey Man may be the last director and has been selected to manage its disappearance into the CPS or the Serious Organised Crime Agency – the home of the also failed Assets Recovery Agency with which he was once involved.

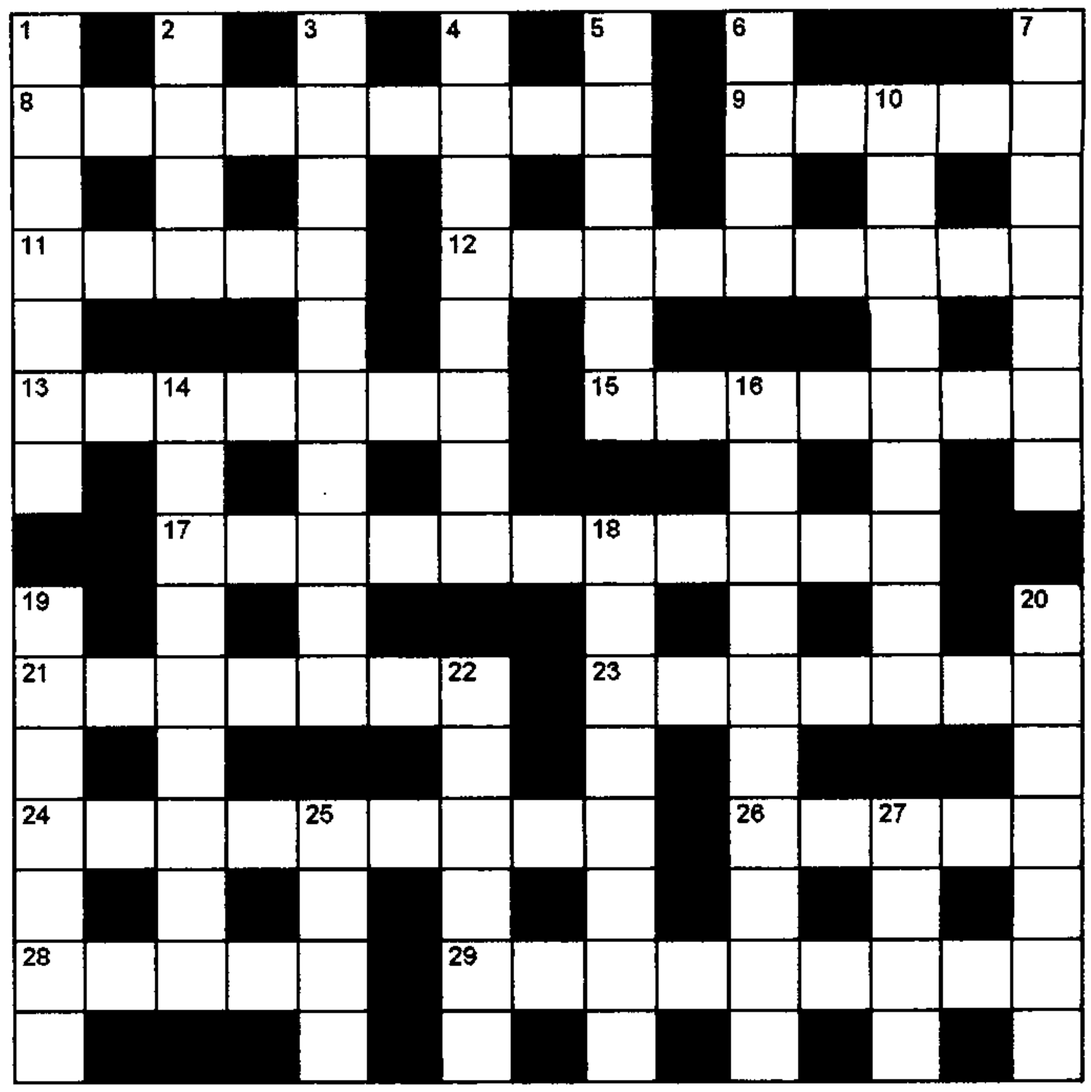
'Slicker'

EYE CROSSWORD 368

by Cyclops

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 4 July 2008

Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN or via email to crossword@private-eye.co.uk



ACROSS

8 Party invites new leaders – Gordon's no. 1 having kittens? (9)
9 Trophy wife (only the third) married to a single supporter (2,3)
11 What's Prince Philip? Nerd about right? (5)
12 Does a tabloid-style interview stop sod, er, moving? (9)
13 A bit of a goer but rare to get screwed during weekday (7)
15 Infiltrated by Pinochet's right wing, a Chile buggered proper! (7)
17 Run into a dug out? No politician with failed policy would admit to it (5,1,1-4)
21 Yank talk used to control the mob? (4,3)
23 Thought by some to be infallible crack stocked by you once (3,4)
24 Dwarf hard on Lord Gnome & co.'s "Cheap booze opportunity" (5,4)
26 "Away with party!" – oddly left dictator? (5)
28 Bananas like testicles? (5)
29 Urethra and Kay stuffed into fancy pastries (4-5)

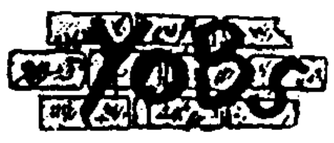
DOWN

1 Run down small con, Dicky (4,3)
2 Instrument of love inserted in love (live) (4)
3 Favourite tabloid activity: showing collapse of UK credit in building (10)
4 Miserable, being a peer (8)
5 Blank, independent, failed candidate for high office (name concealed) (6)
6 Country split by backing of violators of its air space? (4)
7 Andrew, after being dropped in the drink? (7)
10 Right ugly scene in Conservative party building to a climax (9)
14 Copper shoved in butt by Darling – all part of the VIP treatment (3,6)
16 Commons faction gathering in the country? (5,5)
18 Part the of sex act that causes the earth to move? (8)
19 Throwing up – not right impression (7)
20 Be a luvvie: dirty old man, very off appearance (7)
22 Lovey-dovey hack hugged by scout (6)
25 Rise and fall of street greetings (2-2)
27 Sicko snapped: "Out with Conservative yobs!" (4).

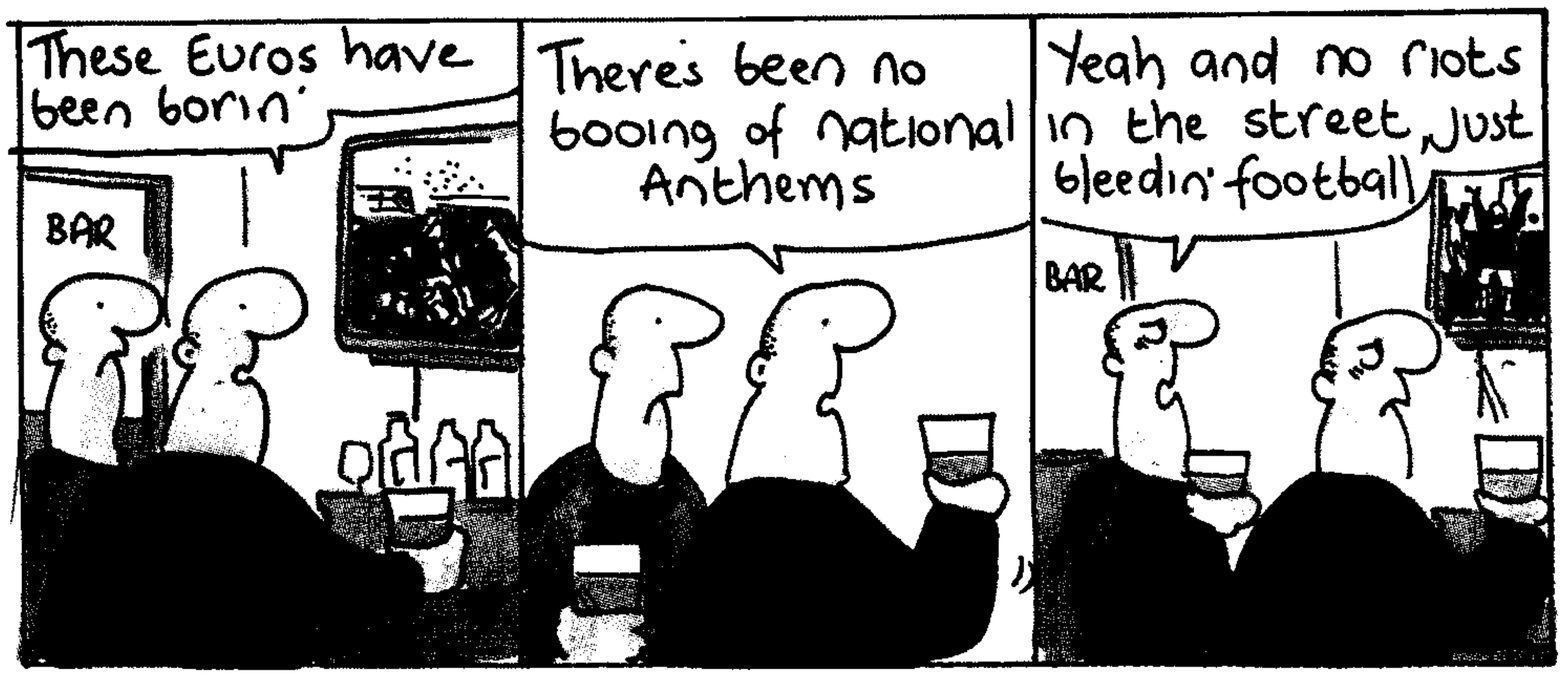
Crossword 367 winner: A.S. MARTIN

ACROSS: 7 Frillies 9 Retail 10 Non-violent 11/23 Riff raff 12/13 Party politics 15 Marilyn 16 Plainly 19 Backside 21 Ruddy 22/25 Star Trek 24 Legal costs 26 Sniffy 27 Revolver.

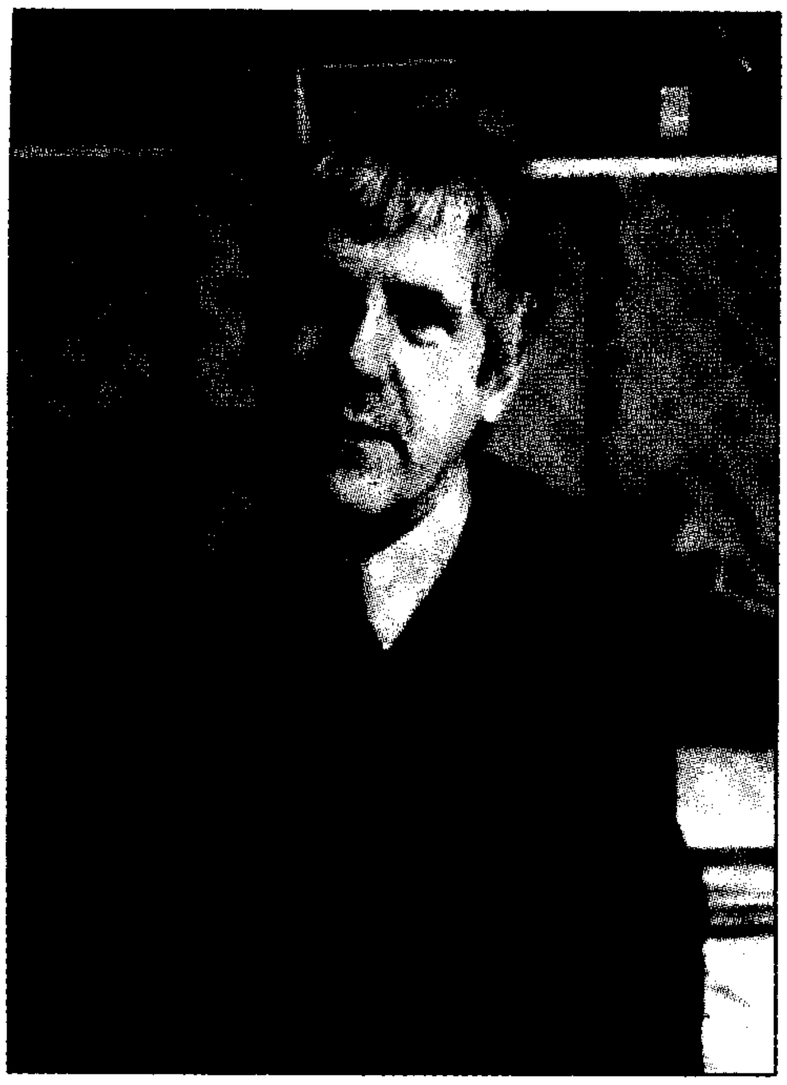
DOWN: 1 Trio 2 Clever dick 3 Misogyny 4 Brutal 5 Stir 6 Difficulty 8 Sherpa 12 Play-acting 14 Third world 17 Lord Levy 18 Merger 20 Inlays.



HUSBAND


These Euros have been borin'
BAR
There's been no booing of national Anthems
Yeah and no riots in the street, just bleedin' football
BAR

THE PAUL FOOT AWARD 2008



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THE CLOSING DATE FOR ENTRIES IS 1st September 2008

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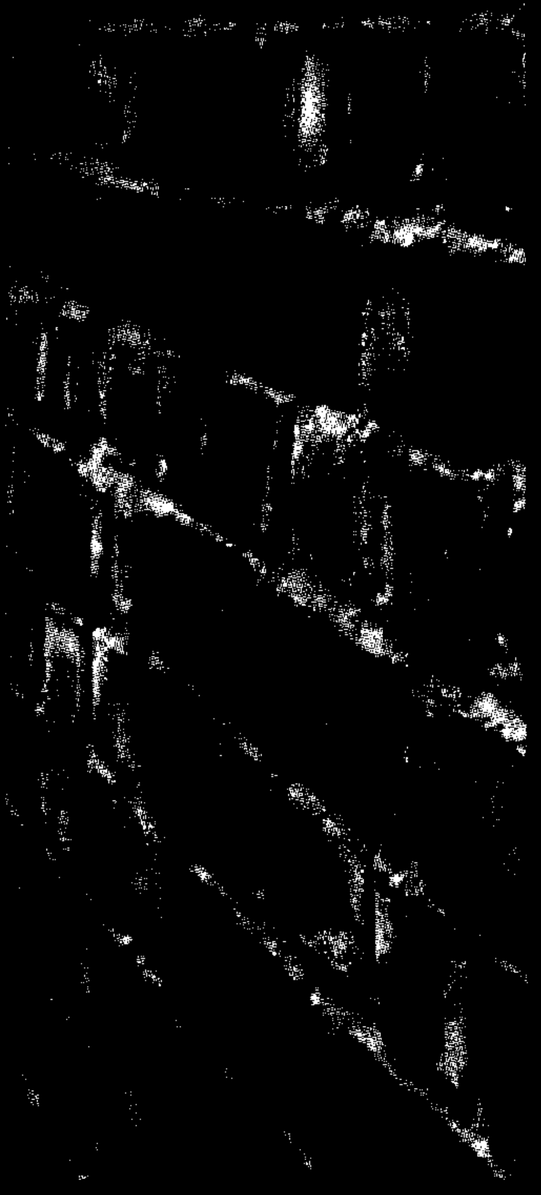

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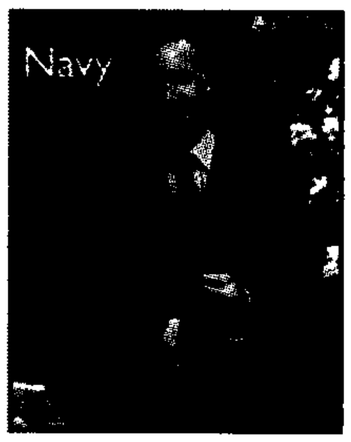

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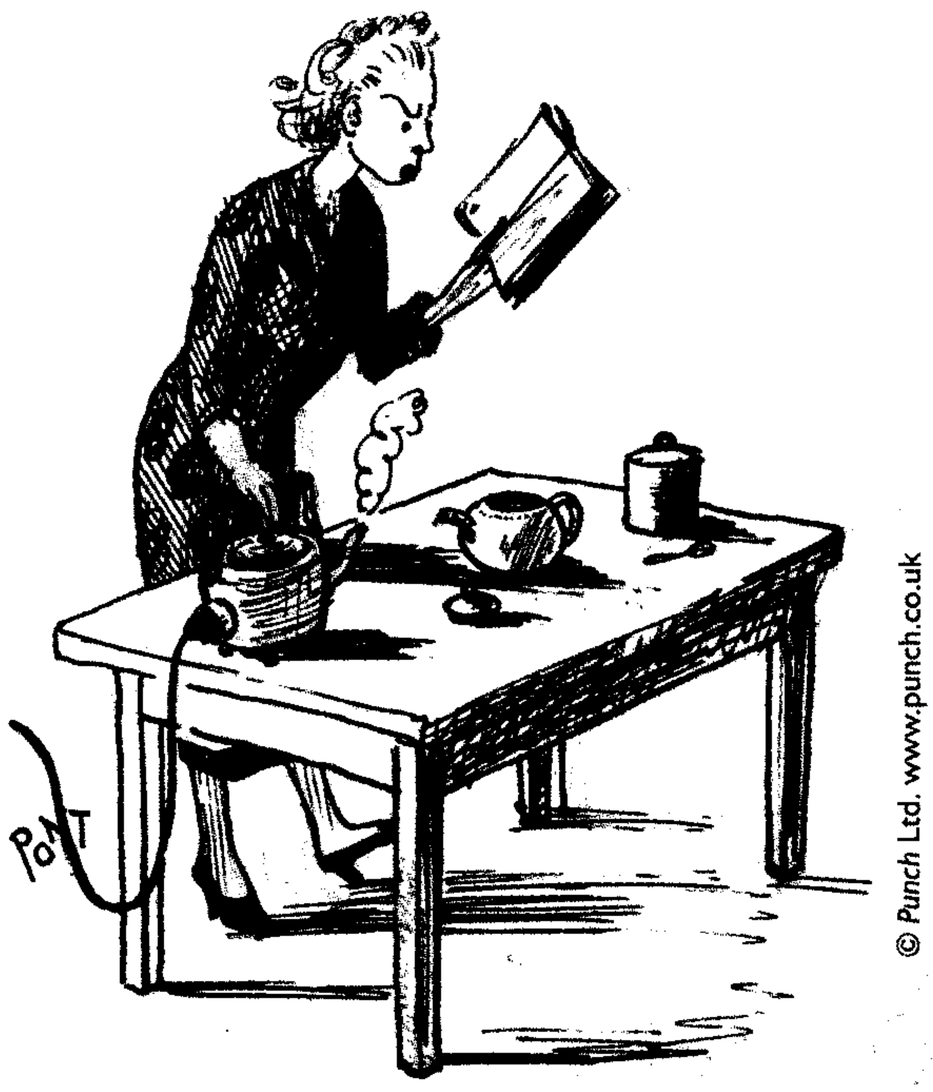

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"... AND THEN POUR THE BOILING WATER OUT OF THE KETTLE INTO THE TEAPOT."

Graham Laidler, 'Pont' (1908-1940), died at the early age of 32 but left a rich legacy of witty observations on 1930s Britain. Pont was most famous for drawing *The British Character* – a series of over 100 cartoons which appeared in *Punch* in which he wryly observed the idiosyncrasies of the British. Some of Pont's cartoons show how much Britain has changed but others reveal 'tendencies' which are as true now as when Pont drew them seventy years ago.

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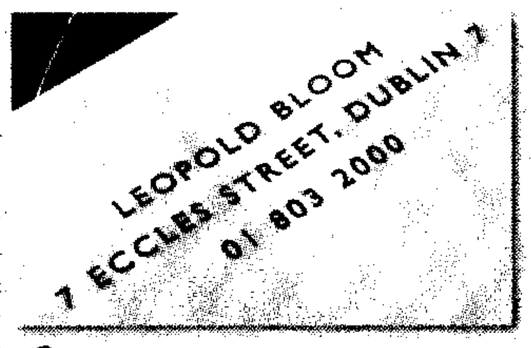

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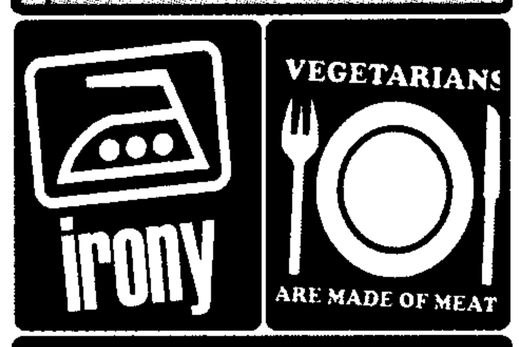

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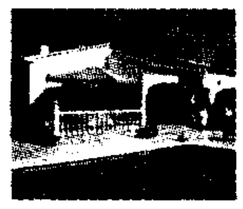

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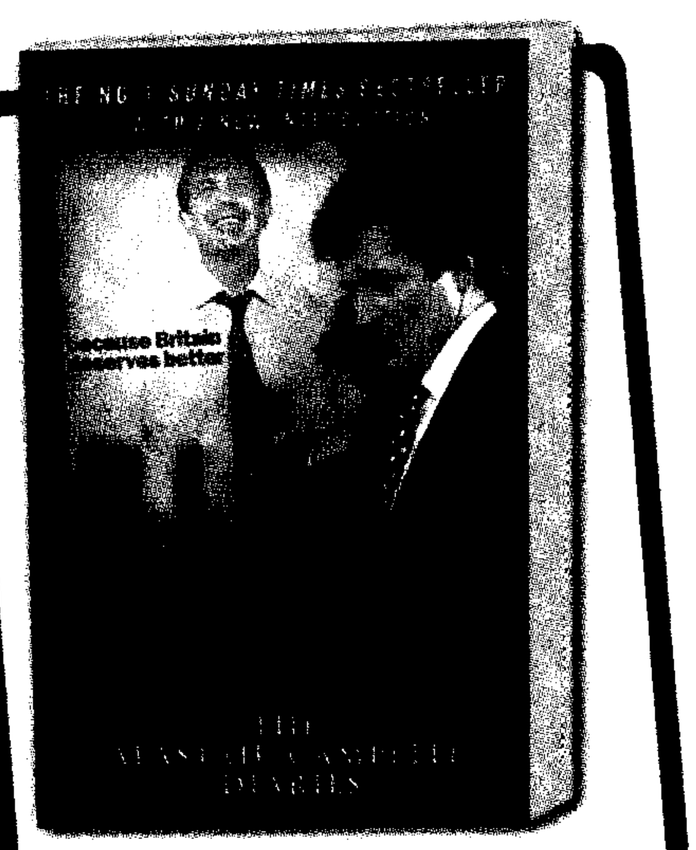

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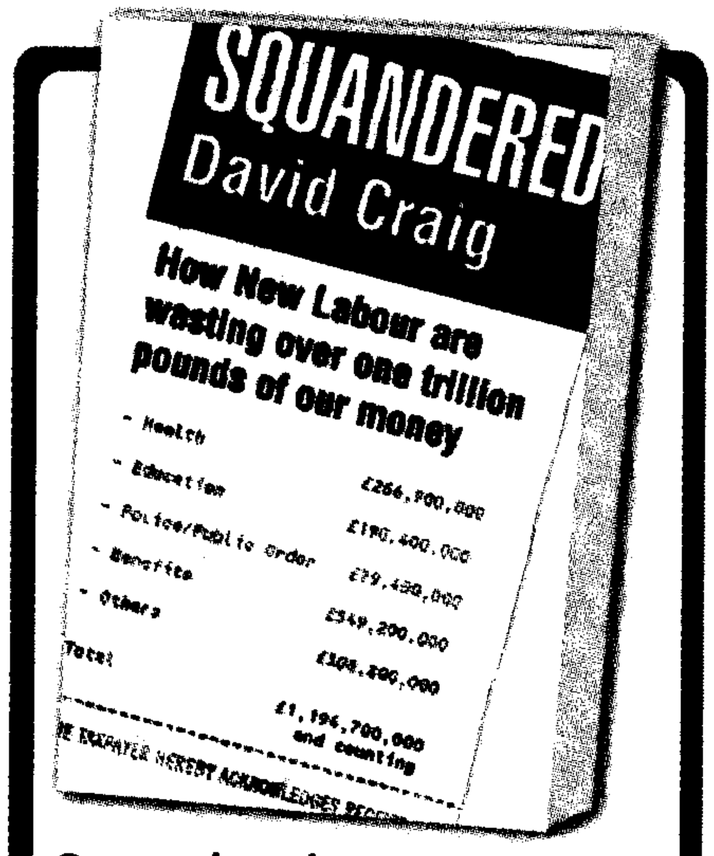

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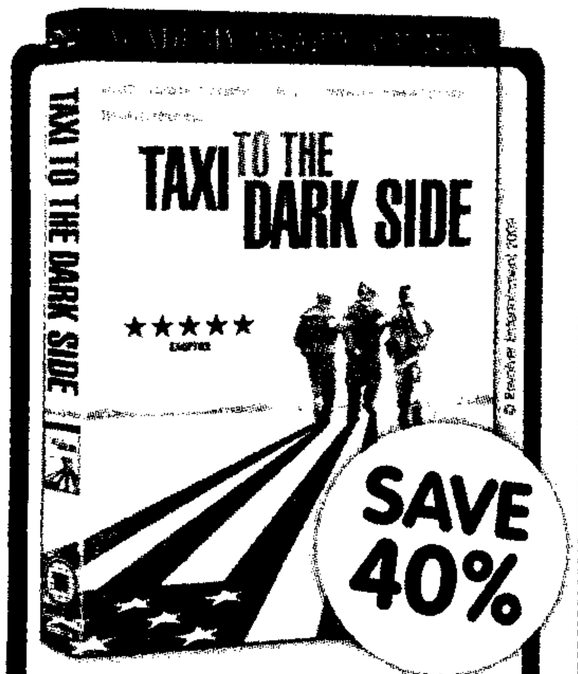

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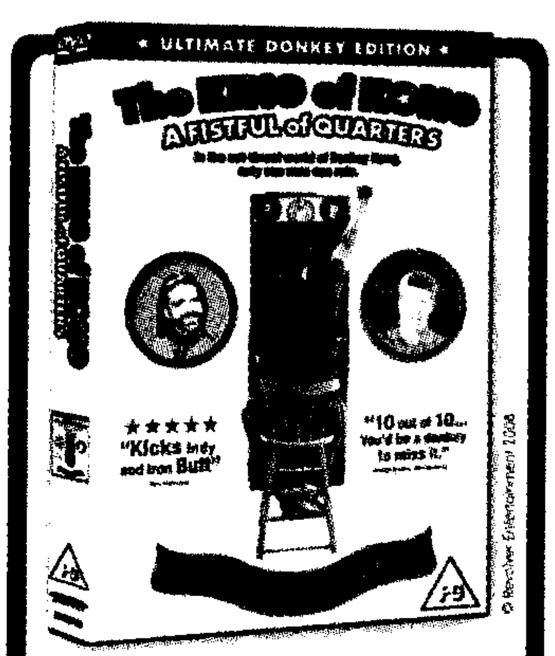

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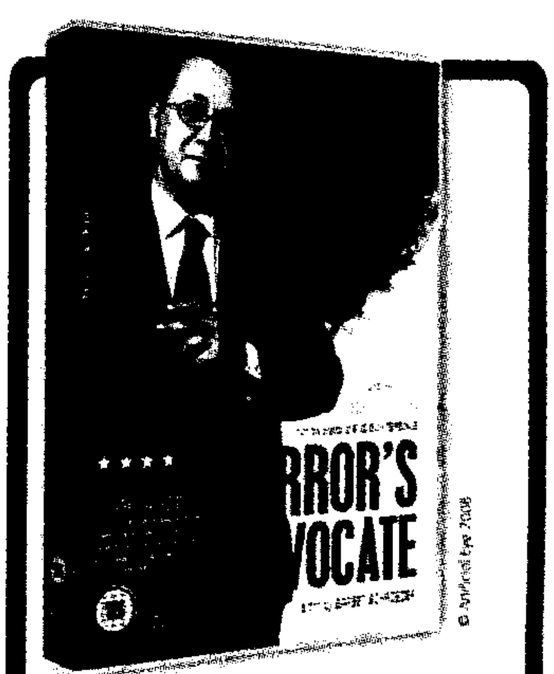

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